Chronicles

June 1995

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

$3.95

PROPHETIC VOICES

Wendell Berry

*

Gore Vidal

*

Frederick Turner

*

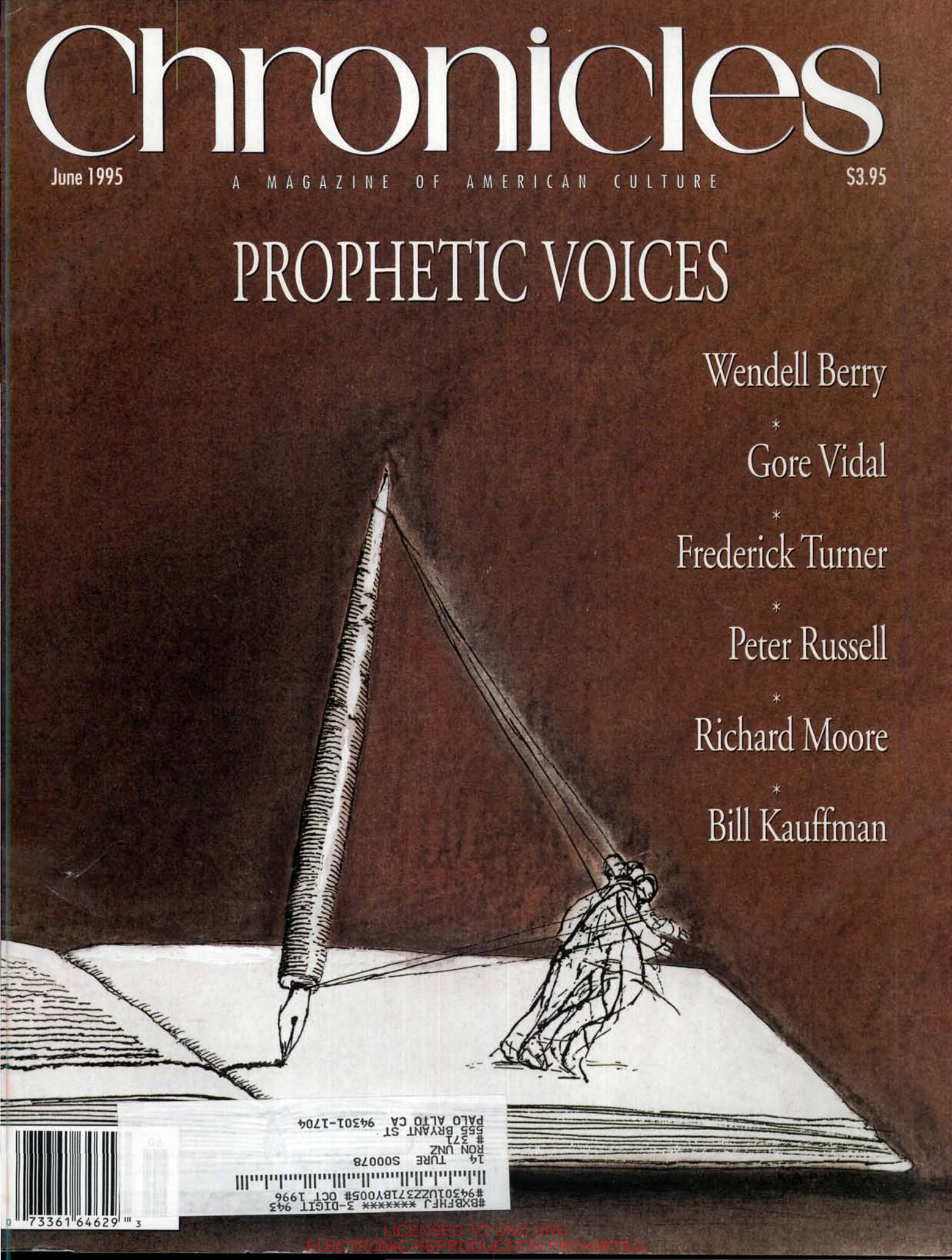
Peter Russell

*

Richard Moore

*

Bill Kauffman



#BXBFHFJ ******* 3-DIGIT 943
#9430UZZ371BY005# OCT 1996
14 TURE S00078
RON UNZ
371
555 BRYANT ST
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

0 73361 64629 3

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW FROM *CHRONICLES* . . . .

INCLUDING ESSAYS BY . . .

- PETER BRIMELOW (*Forbes* Magazine)
- ALLAN CARLSON (The Rockford Institute)
- JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN (University of Chicago Divinity School)
- RICHARD ESTRADA (*Dallas Morning News*)
- THOMAS FLEMING (*Chronicles* Magazine)
- SAMUEL FRANCIS (Nationally Syndicated Columnist)
- PAUL GOTTFRIED (Elizabethtown College)
- GARRETT HARDIN (Professor Emeritus of Human Ecology)
- HANS-HERMANN HOPPE (University of Nevada, Las Vegas)
- DONALD L. HUDDLE (Rice University)
- E. CHRISTIAN KOPFF (University of Colorado in Boulder)

IMMIGRATION
AND THE
AMERICAN IDENTITY

SELECTIONS FROM

Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture, 1985-1995

- RICHARD D. LAMM (Former Governor of Colorado)
- JOHN LUKACS (Professor Emeritus of History)
- WAYNE LUTTON (*The Social Contract* Quarterly)
- GRADY MCWHINEY (Texas Christian University)
- THEODORE PAPPAS (*Chronicles* Magazine)
- CLAES G. RYN (Catholic University of America)
- PETER H. SCHUCK (Yale Law School)
- ROGERS M. SMITH (Yale University)
- GEOFFREY WAGNER (Professor Emeritus of English)
- CHILTON WILLIAMSON, JR. (*Chronicles* Magazine)
- CLYDE WILSON (University of South Carolina)
- PETE WILSON (Governor of California)

A publication of The Rockford Institute

232 pp., paper

$14.95 List Price (plus $2.50 for shipping & handling)

Limited Time Offer to Readers of *Chronicles* - Only $12.95*

(plus $2.50 for shipping & handling)

"For a decade, writers in *Chronicles* have been grappling with this elemental and nation-breaking force in their brilliant, often literary, sometimes histrionic, invariably idiosyncratic but undeniably diverse way. The presence in this volume of California's Governor Pete Wilson, easily reelected since his essay "Citizenship and Immigration" first appeared in *Chronicles*' November 1993 issue and now widely mentioned as the possible catalyst of the immigration issue in presidential politics, is only one reason *Chronicles*' editors can fairly say: you read it here first."

—Peter Brimelow

To order by Credit Card, Call: 1-800-397-8160

Or send check or money order in the amount of $15.45 ($12.95+$2.50 shipping & handling) to *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 800, Mt. Morris, IL 61054

*For immediate service and to receive the discount, please list on payment or mention when ordering SOURCE CODE: A9506, and ITEM CODE: MGRT.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

PERSPECTIVE

Literature Among the Ruins 10
by Thomas Fleming

Ford Madox Ford and the art of good writing.

VIEWS

The Country Writer by Wendell Berry 14
Living large, dreaming small.

Cleaning Our Stables by Gore Vidal 16
Making sense of American rhetoric.

Once Upon a Time in America 18
by Bill Kauffman
When freethinkers reigned.

Frederick Turner and the Rebirth of Literature 21
by Paul Lake
The science of modern art.

For Love of the Muse by Stacey Kors 25
The poetry of Peter Russell.

OPINIONS

A Happy Man in a Terrible Century 30
by Max Oelschlaeger
Edward O. Wilson: *Naturalist*.

A man of integrity.

REVIEWS

Richard S. Wheeler preserves the worthy myth of the West in *Cashbox*, reports **Stephen L. Tanner** ◆ William R. Hawkins tells a sad and tragic tale in *Importing Revolution: Open Borders and the Radical Agenda*, argues **Richard D. Lamm** ◆ Bernard Cornwell's *Battle Flag* regains a real sense of our history, notes **Clyde Wilson** ◆ *Harry Elmer Barnes As I Knew Him* by Robert H. Barnes reminds us of a time when men were men, writes **Theodore Pappas** ◆ 33

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From Italy: The Gay Nihilism of Umberto Eco 38
by Andrea Sciffo

Letter From Virginia: People From Nowhere 40
by Wayne Allensworth

VITAL SIGNS

POETRY: Erato in the Throes 42
by Ralph de Toledano

EDUCATION: Student Reports on the Perverse and Political 43

University of Michigan
by Aaron Steelman

Columbia University 45
by Tom Woods

University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee 45
by Michael Kent

Elizabethtown College 46
by Timothy Richardson

RELIGION: Descent into the Episcopal Church 47
by The Rev. Fr. Gene Geromel

DEPARTMENTS

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES 4

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS 5

PRINCIPALITIES & POWERS 8
Poker on the Titanic
by Samuel Francis

THE HUNDREDTH MERIDIAN 49
Papagueria: II
by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

POETRY
Old Newport by Rudolph Schirmer 17
Progress by Richard Moore 28

ON THE COVER

Cover and illustrations by Janusz Kapusta.

JUNE 1995/3

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITOR
Thomas Fleming

MANAGING EDITOR
Theodore Pappas

SENIOR EDITOR, BOOKS
Chilton Williamson, Jr.

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Michael Washburn

ART DIRECTOR
Anna Mycek-Wodecki

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Harold O.J. Brown, Katherine Dalton, Samuel Francis, George Garrett, E. Christian Kopff, Clyde Wilson

CORRESPONDING EDITORS
Bill Kauffman, Jacob Neusner, John Shelton Reed, Momcilo Selic

EDITORIAL SECRETARY
Leann Dobbs

PUBLISHER
Allan C. Carlson

PUBLICATION DIRECTOR
Guy C. Reffett

PRODUCTION SECRETARY
Anita Candy

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Rochelle Frank

A publication of The Rockford Institute.
Editorial and Advertising Offices:
934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5811.
Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800,
Mount Morris, IL 61054. Call 1-800-877-5459.
For information on advertising in *Chronicles*,
please call Rochelle Frank at (815) 964-5811.

U.S.A. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Road, Sandusky, OH 44870.

Copyright © 1995 by The Rockford Institute.
All rights reserved.

Chronicles (ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $39.00 per year by The Rockford Institute, 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Second-class postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 19, No. 6 June 1995

Printed in the United States of America

On Intelligence and Race

Samuel Francis is among America's best publicists. It is thus painful to read his praise (March 1995) of three materialist, pro-robot scientists, particularly the most materialist of the three, for whom civilization is determined by cold versus hot climates and their "cognitive demands." In Philippe Rushton *laudatio*, Francis quotes the barbaric passage: "the cognitive demands of manufacturing sophisticated tools and making fires, clothing, and shelters (as well as regulating the storage of food . . .) would have selected for higher average intelligence levels than in the less cognitively demanding environment in sub-Saharan Africa. Those individuals who could not solve these problems of survival would have died out . . . " Well, well, I did not know that this kind of primitive Darwinism was still around.

I ask Messrs. Rushton and Francis: Why, then, is Egypt's civilization higher than that of the Eskimos? Why has India produced a greater architecture, poetry, and dance than Siberia? Why did American Indians produce the Maya, Aztec, and Inca empires amid a generally hot climate, and the Canadian Indians nothing of the sort?

The danger of talking about race is that such talk soon ends in determinism. And the question arises: What factors determined the determinist savant?

—Thomas Molnar
Ridgewood, NJ

Dr. Francis Replies:

While I cannot speak for Professor Rushton, the questions raised by Thomas Molnar in criticism of the former's evolutionary theory of racial differences in cognitive ability do not seem to me to invalidate the Rushton thesis. Contrary to Dr. Molnar's caricature of the Rushton theory as "cold versus hot climate" determinism, Rushton argues that environmental challenges in some regions served to select for populations with higher (largely hereditary) cognitive abilities. Climatic temperature is only one such determinant that is particularly relevant to racial differences between the ancestors of Northern Europeans and Asians on the one hand and those of sub-Saharan Africans on the other during the Ice Age. It remains plausible that, if higher cognitive abilities flourished in Egypt, India, or Central America, they did so because of the presence of selective pressures other than climatic temperature, while such pressures did not exist in certain other regions where civilization never arose.

Without a careful examination of the prehistories of these civilizations, it is not possible to specify what those pressures might have been, but it would provide useful work for students of civilization to investigate the matter.

With regard to the "three materialist, pro-robot scientists" (Murray, Herrnstein, and Rushton), they do not seem to differ from all other scientists, physical and social, in their scientific methodology and assumptions. It is curious that few people object when those methodologies and assumptions are applied to any natural or social phenomena other than race. Only when they are applied to the study of racial differences are the standard and commonly accepted methodologies and assumptions of modern science questioned and denounced—as "materialism," "Darwinism," "determinism," and other epithets. Even those who do question modern science on philosophical grounds seem to suspend their objections conveniently when it comes to modern medical, engineering, and industrial applications of its presuppositions.

As for "determinism," I have to dismiss this as something of a bugaboo. "Determinism" as I understand it means simply the idea that all events have necessary and sufficient causes. In the first place, I know of no one who seriously argues that by themselves the genetic bases of cognitive skills compel any particular behavior. In the second place, whether one accepts the abundant empirical evidence for genetic differentiations in behavior or not, surely no one denies that *something* caused some peoples to create and others not to create civilizations, and whatever that something might be, it is surely no less "deterministic" than human intelligence and the genetic forces that in large part determine it.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On Immigration

There you go again, on immigration. You restrictionists have enough interesting arguments to make, you don't need to resort to bogus complaints. John C. Vinson did this in his February review of *The Immigration Invasion*, by stating that "the proliferation of Korean-owned liquor stores in South-Central Los Angeles has made many of the locals restless."

The Korean immigrants didn't create whatever concentration of alcoholic beverage licenses exists in South Central. The number both of beer-and-wine and hard-liquor establishments in the area declined by more than 10 percent between 1982 and 1992, essentially the period of major inroads by proprietors of Korean descent. To the degree that South Central is saturated with booze merchants, this was even more true when the owners were mostly black or, before that, white.

Of course, however many bars and liquor stores are in a certain area and whoever owns them, the ultimate explanation for the presence must be that customers demand it. You might explore that subject when you take a break from the immigration wars.

—Tim Ferguson
Wall Street Journal
Los Angeles, CA

Mr. Vinson Replies:

Though Korean immigrants didn't create the South Central booze commerce, they have at least played a role in maintaining it—a point, I believe, Mr. Ferguson would concede. It was not my purpose, however, to single out Koreans, as a group, for criticism. Rather, it was to puncture the hubris of certain Koreans who seem to think they are God's gift to America. Such hubris, I hasten to add, is by no means limited to Koreans.

I was also aiming to puncture the strange self-abasement of certain Americans who tend to view immigrants as virtual saviors. To hear these people tell it, we native-born citizens are simply too decadent to maintain America without regular transfusions of foreign family values and work ethics. One wonders how we ever survived before the 1965 Immigration Act.

Let's not oversell others or sell ourselves short. All that glitters from abroad isn't gold. Sometimes the glitter is just a reflection off a wine bottle.

On The Hundredth Meridian

I've just completed one of Chilton Williamson's columns and I'm literally embarrassed. I now understand what it is that he has been trying to express these last few months in his work. Everything he wrote about his elk hunting trip is absolutely perfect, and yet it sounds so anachronistic! This is what is so embarrassing. The people in that particular story should be myself and most Americans, and yet, *my* daily concerns involve the resale of my silly condominium in a San Diego suburb and my family's upcoming "trip" to Disneyland! My God, my God, why have we forsaken Thee?!

Thank you, Chilton Williamson, Jr., for giving my envy a proper stirring.

—Bob Sale
San Diego, CA

Chilton Williamson, Jr., Replies:

Mr. Sale has taken firm hold on The Hundredth Meridian: I couldn't have put it better myself. The column, in spite of its apparent general popularity, has been misunderstood by some readers, who have taken its purpose to be the glorification of gore, guts, guns, and even alcohol. The fact that what were until recently common realities of human experience can be mistaken for some sort of sick fantasy suggests that it may be even later than I dreamed.

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

THE CONTRACT WITH America is looking more and more like an election-year gimmick. Consider the strange alliance that Representative Henry Hyde (R-IL) has made with freshman Representative Lynn Woosley (D-CA) to federalize the collection of child support payments. If Congress ever passes the "Uniform Child Support Enforcement Act" as part of the GOP's "welfare reform" package, then every state in the Union will be required to notify the Internal Revenue Service of all court-ordered child support decrees. Thereafter, the IRS will act as the collection agent.

Sound like a good idea? Consider this, from a Hyde-Woosley briefing paper on the bill: "Custodial parents will be presumed to have assigned the right to collect support to the IRS unless they affirmatively elect to retain such rights." More insidiously, the IRS really won't "collect" anything. Employers will. "Wherever possible, collections shall be made through wage withholding or through estimated tax payments for the self-employed." To make the bill more attractive to those who might not support it, "when not enough money is collected to pay both child support and taxes, child support payments will have priority."

Of course, the Hyde-Woosley bill sounds great. Many fathers abandon their kids. If Dad heads for the state line, Mom must seek the help of multiple state agencies and lawyers to collect what is owed the children. In 1990, Hyde and Woosley report, 65 percent of women who "wanted child support did not obtain it," while in 1989 "25 percent of those women supposed to receive child support received nothing." They also say nearly 16 million children under age 18 live with only one parent, and that in 1990, 10 million women had children under age 21 in fatherless homes, the poverty rate for which was 32 percent.

Whether a woman "wants" child support and whether she is entitled to it are two different things, but in any event the bill's authors aver that collecting child support requires so much bureaucratic testosterone that only the IRS can do it. Hyde and Woosley say the 1,500 state agencies charged with collecting child support only get nine percent of the money they are after, or about $3.98 of child support for every dollar spent trying to collect it. Less than one dollar for every ten dollars owed is collected, and Hyde and Woosley estimate they could move 300,000 single mothers off the dole by collecting the child support they are due.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As far as enforcement goes, the scary stuff is in the large print. The IRS will collect child support the same way it collects taxes: "without judicial intervention . . . summarily . . . by seizing the taxpayer's property." In short, it will use the same Gestapo-like tactics to hound "deadbeat dads" that it uses to hound law-abiding taxpayers. "That's exactly why we are doing it," Hyde's spokesman Tom Chesno says. "It's the most feared [and efficient] collection agency in the world." And to show how fearsome and efficient the IRS can be, Hyde and Woosley quote an article from *Reader's Digest* that documented the agency's abuse of taxpayers.

This is the kind of bill no one on Capitol Hill wants to oppose, including House Speaker Newt Gingrich and his deputy, Representative Dick Armey, the Majority Leader. It has more than 80 cosponsors, one of whom is Representative Steve Largent, a freshman Republican from Oklahoma. He told Chesno, "this is the only time you'll see me vote for the federalization of anything," but perhaps that's because Largent's father was a deadbeat, too. Mr. Largent wants to "send a signal to young men," although whether he thinks young men should marry before they have children or that women should stay with their husbands is anyone's guess.

But neither Largent nor Hyde nor Woosley, who claims a "deadbeat" husband forced her onto welfare 30 years ago, has stopped to ask about the constitutionality of this bill or whether collecting child support and enforcing divorce decrees is a legitimate function of the federal government. Nor has it occurred to Mr. Hyde that he may run into trouble if Majority Leader Armey's flat-tax bill ever passes. Mr. Armey, who supports Hyde's totalitarian measure, would eliminate withholding, which begs the question of how Mr. Hyde's paladins at the IRS would conduct their crusade.

These issues notwithstanding, the problems here are not just "deadbeat Dads" and "single Moms," but divorce and what we used to call bastards, or "illegitimate children." Millions of single mothers and their children suffer in poverty because they live in a society that no longer views marriage as a lifelong commitment and allows, encourages, and subsidizes divorce on demand, recreational sex, and the birth of what Diana Ross would call a "love child." It may be true that many children have been abandoned by their fathers, but perhaps that's because "Dad" ain't gonna buy the cow when he can get the milk for free. Where there is no sacred vow to bind irrevocably a man and woman, where there is neither legal, social, nor religious sanction for promiscuity, adultery, abandonment, and divorce, don't expect a man or woman to feel a sense of duty to each other or to the offspring that sprang from their loins.

Then there's the case of the man who made a marriage vow in a church and kept it. In the abstract, Hyde's pointman Chesno is right when he says there is no excuse for not supporting your children. But a marriage vow creates not only certain rights but also reciprocal duties. A man is duty-bound to support his children, but that duty assumes an intact marriage with their mother. When the "unhappy" liberated woman gets a "no-fault" divorce and moves the children 3,000 miles away from the father, she has denied him any role in raising his children. She is the one responsible for the squalor in which they may be living. Yet he must smilingly pay the freight so Mom, the kids, and perhaps Mom's live-in beau can have a blast. The jilted ex-husband is allowed no complaint. He is not allowed to ask why his wife can destroy his home and family on a whim and get paid for it. He shuts up. He pays up. Or else.

Most people don't know it, but in some circumstances it's already a federal crime not to pay child support, and the IRS collects child support from deadbeat parents if a state supplies the names. Yet it seems the Party of Alvin Toffler and its futurist monarch aren't much concerned about the promise they made to diminish the power of the state. Instead, they will increase it by allowing the IRS to poke its nose further into the affairs of the American family and its hands deeper into the pockets of the working man.

The Democrats were right. The GOP didn't offer a Contract with America. They put a contract *out* on America.

—R. Cort Kirkwood

WHEN JACK KEMP ducked out of the presidential run, who really regretted it? Mostly, leaders on the left. He was their foil to the other Republicans. When Kemp yelped at voters for being insufficiently loving of the urban poor—nobody, not even Jesse Jackson, can mau mau like Kemp—the media could complain that others aren't "reaching out for the black vote." But why must reaching out for that bloc entail reaching for everyone else's wallet?

Kemp was like that, passionately devoted to welfare, big government, big spending, and even welfare for illegal aliens, not to mention foreign wars and foreign aid. But he also loved marginal tax cuts, meaning he did not have the decency to tell the truth about government accounting. He made some noises against the bailout of Mexico, the United States banks holding its debt, but given his history, who could take this seriously?

He was as verbally tricky as William Clinton, and, like him, his speeches were always much too long. The difference is that Clinton is smarter. Kemp could not resist openly offending his audiences. Once at a Heritage Foundation event, an innocent young intern asked what he thought about the work of Thomas Sowell. Kemp interrupted the question to denounce conservatives—and implicitly the questioner—for not celebrating civil rights, Rosa Parks, and racial integration as guided by the federal government.

Republicans finally stopped pretending that his fanatical egalitarianism was merely an attempt to sell free enterprise to a new audience. The clincher came when he flew to California to vilify Proposition 187. His aides were embarrassed, his followers were disillusioned, and his prospects for the presidency, already low, were wiped out. "At fundraising events," he said in his final press conference, "I didn't seem to be talking about the things that fund-raising people wanted me to talk about." No kidding.

This magazine was the earliest and most relentless of Jack Kemp's critics, and much of that material was stolen by sunshine soldiers. Fine: we can declare victory and move on. It's too bad Kemp's influence and style aren't going to disappear with him.

The *Wall Street Journal*'s editorial page ended its political obituary of Kemp this way: "[Kemp's] optimism has helped to transcend crabby right-wing tribalism. . . . While others will have to finish the job, they should remember what—and who—got them this far." Progressive conservatives should remember how far this got Kemp.

—Jeffrey Tucker

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE, which was founded in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, in June 1994, seeks to advance the social, cultural, economic, and political well-being and independence of the Southern people. According to Southern League President Michael Hill, the South, though it has been subsumed by the American Empire, remains a distinct historical entity: "The South has its own culture based on particular folkways, heroes, music, cuisine, dialect, religion, ethnicity, and political philosophy; since 1860 the South has been the last bastion of Western Christian civilization." To league officials, that is why the region has come under heavy attack by the forces of statism. It stands as the last remaining barrier to the triumph of a godless New World Order that seeks to destroy all such cultural anachronisms. As long as there is a true South—and not a New South or Sun Belt—there will be men and women who demand to be left alone to live their lives as they see fit, answerable only to God and legitimate government.

Until now, efforts to save the South have been either all head and no body or vice-versa. Southern intellectuals like the Nashville Agrarians of the 1930's had sound ideas but had no means of acting on them. On the other hand, mass populist movements have come and gone because they lacked leadership. Unlike these previous efforts, the Southern League combines some of the country's most original thinkers with a large number of battle-scarred activists. Since its inception last summer, the league has swelled from a mere handful of founders to a mass organization with members from New Hampshire to California.

Critics of the Southern League often dismiss the organization's goals, asking, "Wasn't Southern independence discredited by the failure of 1860-65?" Michael Hill says that "The issue of secession's legality has never been publicly entertained, especially since the Supreme Court's decision in *Texas* v. *White* (1867) that the nation was, had been, and always would be an indissoluble union of states. But anyone with knowledge of the state conventions that debated constitutional ratification in the late 1780's will see the tyranny inherent in such an assertion by the judiciary." Secession, as Jefferson understood, is the ultimate right of a free people.

The League's Confederate ancestors were bucking the trend of political centralization and nationalism in the mid-19th century. While they attempted to dissolve the American political union, Italy, Germany, and Japan created nation-states, and Great Britain and France, among others, sought worldwide empires. Although many Northeastern intellectuals have confidently proclaimed the death of regionalism and nationalism and the rise of the "international community," the time may be right for Southern revival. The Southern League believes that it is the newest agent of a trend toward political devolution that has already swept away the Soviet Union, its satellite empire in Eastern Europe, and Yugoslavia; fueled a violent battle in long-subjugated Chechnya; and is now threatening to split apart Italy, Great Britain, Canada, and Brazil.

Unless it returns to constitutional government, the United States cannot maintain its present territorial integrity except by quelling independent-minded citizens through terrorist violence. The absence of a historical "American" culture has made possible various sectional (not to mention racial and ethnic) cultures that have prevented the formation of a "nation" in the true sense of the word. As the nation declined, the government expanded its powers. Those who opposed such expansion on constitutional grounds found that a tyrannical court had used the 14th Amendment to destroy such safeguards as the Second, Fourth, and Tenth Amendments. This empire, like Yugoslavia, was never really legitimate and is certain to fall apart, either by a peaceful devolution toward constitutional liberty or by a process of ethnic rebellions and refined revolts. In the meantime, says Hill, Southerners should remember who they are and defend their cultural and religious symbols from political vandalism.

For more information about the Southern League, write to Michael Hill, P.O. Box 40910, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 35404.

—Michael Washburn

GORDON KAHL was a simple farmer who became famous for not filing income tax returns. Imprisoned and hounded by IRS agents who never did prove he owed any amount of money, Kahl and his son were involved in a shootout with police. The son is still serving a prison sentence, but the father was surrounded and shot in Arkansas by police officers who mutilated and burned his body. How did a decorated war veteran end up on the FBI's most-wanted list? The documentary *Death and Taxes* interviews Kahl's family and friends as well as police officers, sheriffs, and a delightful IRS spokesgirl who apparently thinks he had it coming. A friend lent me a copy of the film, and I was so impressed with it that we called and told the company that we wanted to advertise it in *Chronicles* (see the full-page advertisement on page 13). David Koresh was a kook, Randy Weaver was more than a little strange, but Gordon Kahl was the kind of American who made this country, and his death—and the media coverage that vilified him—are a national disgrace. Buy the film and show it to your neighbors.

—Thomas Fleming

OBITER DICTA: A number of readers have noticed the monthly editorials in this section by R. Cort Kirkwood. Formerly an editorial writer at the *Washington Times*, Mr. Kirkwood is now the managing editor of the *Arlington Courier* and *McLean Providence Journal*, two weekly newspapers in northern Virginia. He will continue to contribute regular reports on D.C.-area politics.

Tickets are also still available for the Southern Heritage Society's Fifth Annual Confederate Heritage Conference, which will be held in Monroe, Louisiana, on the weekend of May 26-27. Among the speakers at this event will be Dr. C. Gregg Singer, who will address "The Theological and Philosophical Foundations of Secession and the War." For more information, call the Southern Heritage Society at 318-323-3061.

Chronicles is now available at the following stores in Ohio: Barnes & Noble Superstore, 4940 Monroe St., Toledo; Media Play, Franklin Place, Toledo; Leo's Book Shop, 330 North Superior St., Toledo; Little Professor Book Center, 101 Boardman-Canfield Rd., Boardman; Erieview News, Inc., 1930 East 6th St., Cleveland; The Newsroom, 15609 Detroit Ave., Lakewood; Joseph Beth Booksellers, 2692 Madison Rd., Cincinnati; Cincinnati Fount Square News, 101 East 5th St., Cincinnati; Media Play, 4328 West Broad St., Columbus; Borders Book Shop, 4545 Kenney Rd., Columbus; Little Professor Book Center, Troy Towne Center, Troy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by Samuel Francis

Poker on the Titanic

If any single act showed the essential fraudulence of the ballyhooed "Republican Revolution" we were supposed to be enjoying this year, it was the last official vote of the previous Congress, less than a month after the 1994 elections, to pass the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade by a bipartisan majority. Of course, the GATT vote took place before the arrival of the new congressmen and senators and so cannot fairly be charged against them, but it can be charged against the Republican leaders of the last as well as the current Congress, Newt Gingrich and Robert Dole, both of whom did all they could to ensure the creation of the global trade leviathan and to smother opposition to it from the right. Just in case anyone doubted the message the Stupid Party's princelings were sending, both gentlemen also hustled to endorse President Clinton's bizarre bailout of Mexico only a few weeks into the new Congress, again in the face of a somewhat more militant opposition from within the Republican right, in Congress and out. In the event, however, not even the support of the new majority leadership could salvage the original $40 billion in loan guarantees Mr. Clinton was so eager to offer the giant basket case across the Rio Grande, and the President and his millionaire advisors were finally forced to rely on executive powers over which Congress had little control to pull the Mexicans and their Wall Street dependents back from the lip of disaster.

Revolution, if it means nothing else, involves a transfer of power, political as well as economic and cultural, from one set of rulers to another, and, aside from the specific flaws of GATT and the bailout, what the GOP's support for them showed was the falsity of the party's "revolutionary" pretensions. Both measures transparently reflected the interests of the American managerial elite and its global cousins in Mexico and the transnational bureaucracies that the "global economy" entrenches, and both measures threaten ruin to the peoples, American and other, over whose fates these elites preside. The "Republican Revolution," insofar as it possesses any reality at all, seems to be directed only against the Democratic Party and the incumbent administration, though by trying to bail Mr. Clinton out of one of the most unpopular decisions of his two years in office, even the impulse toward partisan political rebellion seemed to wither when the interests of the dominant global elites were at stake.

Opposition to GATT and the Mexican deal was mobilized by an unlikely coalition consisting of hard right nationalist and populist forces led by Pat Buchanan and the soft left of Ralph Nader and various labor and environmentalist groups. Ross Perot was noticeably absent and uncharacteristically silent, and probably his mixture of conspiracy theory and egomania would not have contributed much toward success anyway. But there is one opponent of GATT who received little attention, perhaps in part because he is not an American at all and in part because what he had to say about the agreement and what it represents is so devastating that the GATT-crats would have few bullets with which to shoot back.

That opponent is Sir James Goldsmith, who like Mr. Perot is a self-made billionaire but who unlike the Texan is not given to interrupting his sermons with tales of terrorists in his backyard trying to kidnap him. Mr. Goldsmith is also a member of the European Parliament, and much of what he has to say in his book *The Trap* (Carroll and Graf Publishers, New York, $20) reflects his experience and his misgivings about the current plans for European unification, which are to the continent what NAFTA and GATT are to the United States and its neighbors. *The Trap* was a best-seller in France when it was published in 1993, but its English translation, appearing in this country the following year, was barely noticed, despite the imminence of the GATT debate.

Mr. Goldsmith's arguments against GATT involve a good deal more than the specific economic objections one might expect from a businessman. Indeed, his argument involves an assault on the whole fabric of the global regime that has come to be called the New World Order and the elites that run it, and the main danger he sees in the agreement, the regime, and its elites is that they seek to replace national autonomy with a transnational apparatus of power under their own control, divorced from either popular or legal restraints.

Mr. Goldsmith rejects the concept of free trade, arguing that the internationalization of economies renders the Ricardian doctrine of comparative advantage obsolete. Hence, nations can no longer specialize in producing and selling goods for which they are particularly suited because "political systems can be transformed, technology can be transferred instantaneously anywhere in the world on a microchip, and capital is free to be invested wherever the anticipated yields are highest." The populations of undeveloped nations are thus new entrants to the world economy "in direct competition with the work forces of developed countries," and the latter can expect to see global free trade drain their nations of their jobs, capital, and, eventually, their sovereignty. Those who stand to gain from the entrenchment of the free trade global empire will be "those who can benefit from an almost inexhaustible supply of cheap labor. They will be the companies who move their production offshore to low-cost areas; the companies who can pay lower salaries at home; and those who as a result will receive large dividends. But they will be like poker players on the Titanic. The wounds inflicted on their societies will be too deep, and brutal consequences will follow."

But of course the national states in which these corporate elites are headquartered are ceasing to be "their societies" in any significant sense. "The new phenomenon of our age," he writes, "is the emergence of transnational corporations, with the ability to move production at will anywhere in the world, in order to systematically benefit from lower wages wherever they are to be found. . . . The globalization of the market is vital to them, both to produce cheaply and to sell universally. Because they do not necessarily owe allegiance to the countries where they operate, there is a divorce between the interests of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

transnational corporations and those of society."

The dimensions of the new global power structure are more than economic, however, and the means by which the emerging global elite seeks to extend and entrench its hegemony are only in part economic. "The West," Mr. Goldsmith writes, meaning the dominant elites who prevail in the nations of the West, "believes that its destiny is to guide or coerce diverse human cultures into a single global civilization. It cannot tolerate the coexistence in the world of different cultures. . . . This acute form of cultural imperialism is reinforced by international business, which considers that it would benefit from the destruction of social diversity and its replacement by a global monoculture hungry for western-type products." "Global democracy," "nation-building," and (most recently) U.N. "peacekeeping" missions are the current incarnations of the imperative to reconstruct and manage the planet along "Western" lines.

Mr. Goldsmith argues that one of the most brutal consequences of GATT and the regime it institutes will be the destruction of the rural and agricultural societies of the Third World as the "Western"-imposed economic modernization that GATT is supposed to encourage uproots whole populations from their cultural and economic soil and drives them into megalopolises as urban proletariats or into the developed world as culturally alien immigrants. The "morbid intumescences" that deracinated and impoverished urban masses create he sees as the direct result of the "Green Revolution" and the intensive, scientifically based, elite-dominated, and high-capital agribusiness it spawned. Mexico's Chiapas revolt that erupted the day NAFTA went into effect is fueled by the same nightmarish perception by its peasant participants.

In the United States, he sees the transformation already well under way. He cites the *Time* magazine cover story of April 9, 1990, which predicted that by the early part of the next century "the average U.S. resident, as defined by census statistics, will trace his or her descent to Africa, Asia, the Hispanic world, the Pacific islands, Arabia—almost anywhere but white Europe," and he cites Oakeshott and Santayana to the effect that "one of the disasters that can befall any community is that its shared understandings, in other words, its common culture, be dissipated in too rapid or too sweeping change."

> Whatever the outcome of this extraordinary and grand experiment, it will be impossible to avoid social torment. The destabilization and in some cases social breakdown of the cities, the multiethnic, multitongued population, the rapid geographic mobility which has resulted in uprooted nuclear or broken families, have all contributed to widespread disorientation.

Instead of the emerging global regime based on free trade and denationalization for the benefit of global managerial imperialism, Mr. Goldsmith argues for what he calls "regional trade blocs" and subsidiarity in social policy and political authority, the very opposite of the Maastricht Treaty, which "seeks to create a supranational, centralized, bureaucratic state—a homogenized union. It would destroy the pillars on which Europe was built—its nations. It would convert Europe into one multicultural space, in which national identities would be fused and sovereignty abandoned. It would coerce ancient European nations to merge into the ultimate artificial state. As George Orwell remarked, it is characteristic of intellectuals to pass over in incomprehension the dominant political passion of the age. Today, that passion is the search for national identity. And this is the moment when European ruling elites are seeking to destroy the identity of every European nation."

The later chapters of *The Trap* are marred by Mr. Goldsmith's invectives against science and technology themselves, and he winds up praising non-Western cultures and religions for their vision of man fused with nature in distinction to the Western view of man as nature's master. He is right that the Enlightenment lies at the root of both Marxist and Western managerial globalism and the imperial homogenization they command, but he grossly overstates the need to retreat from scientific modes of thought. He winds up his book with a long quotation from a letter to President James Buchanan from an Indian chief that warbles endlessly on about how "we are part of the earth and it is part of us." All of this is nice, but, as he notes, the chief was able to write the letter only "with the help of an amanuensis," and it is only because such institutions as writing, pen, and paper were produced by the civilization of the West that the chief was able to compose it at all. The Hindu, Buddhist, and primitive cultures animated by the visions of man as a merely passive appendage of nature that Mr. Goldsmith so warmly endorses remained the victims of nature—and the victims of whatever rivals were able to master nature more effectively—precisely because of their vision. It is not just the Enlightenment and its legacies that Mr. Goldsmith winds up rejecting but the whole body of Western civilization since the time of the Ionian natural philosophers. Without that body of thought and discovery, the people of the West too would have long since disappeared beneath the hooves of nature or their human adversaries.

Nevertheless, apart from such excesses, *The Trap* remains a classic source for the case against the transnational power that now has the allegiance, not of a small band of ideologues, but of the leaders of the major economic, political, and cultural forces of the world. Whatever tricks and slogans pseudo-revolutionaries like Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole may devise to steal the authentic revolution that put them in power, Mr. Goldsmith's argument is one to which an increasing number of Americans and indeed non-Americans subscribe. It is those who share his beliefs and values, from Chiapas to Chicago, who constitute the real revolutionaries at the end of the 20th century, and regardless of the national and cultural divisions that separate them, they should start working together against a common and global enemy that has come to define both the conventional right and the conventional left. They have nothing to lose but the chains those enemies are forging for them.

MOVING?

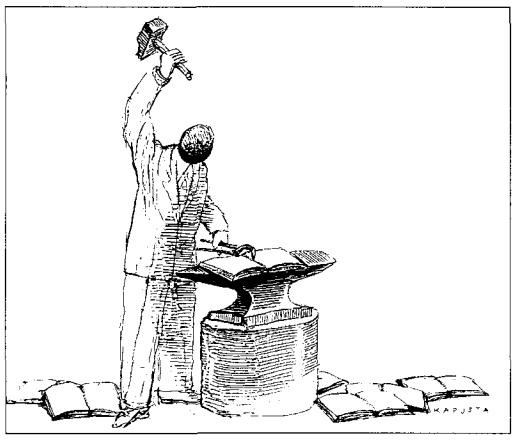
To assure uninterrupted delivery of CHRONICLES please notify us in advance. Send change of address on this form with the mailing label from your latest issue of CHRONICLES to:

Subscription Department
CHRONICLES
P.O. Box 800
Mount Morris, Illinois 61054

NAME

ADDRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Janusz Kapusta

Literature Among the Ruins

by Thomas Fleming

"*Mon cher, c'est notre métier, le vrai métier de chien . . . Vous écrivez et vous écrivez . . . et personne, personne au monde ne comprendra.*" Joseph Conrad's complaint to his young collaborator, Ford Madox Hueffer, might have been put on Ford's tombstone, when he died in 1939. You write, and you write, and no one in the world understands. Although the popular reputation of Ford Madox Ford (as he later called himself) now rests primarily on one book, *The Good Soldier*, his career is emblematic of 20th-century literature, its grandiose ambitions and its humiliating failures.

In his life Ford seems to have known nearly every writer worth knowing. Through his grandfather, the painter Madox Brown, and his uncle William Rossetti, he was connected to the Pre-Raphaelites. He knew Meredith and Hardy in his youth and came to be an intimate of Henry James and Joseph Conrad, with whom he collaborated on several novels; after the Great War, in which he served as a man in his 40's, he worked closely with Pound, and as founding editor of the *Transatlantic Review* he published the best of his contemporaries. He was the rarest of critics, who could appreciate the talents of the two great literary antagonists of the early 20th century, James and Wells, and many a younger writer (Lawrence, for example) owed his start to Ford's encouragements. The only writer, in his estimation, who never took revenge upon him for this kindness was Ezra Pound.

Most striking today is Ford's devotion to good writing. As Pound wrote shortly after Ford's death, he had been "a very gallant combatant for those things of the mind and of letters which have been in our time too little prized." Pound shared with Ford a passion for "French clarity and simplicity in the writing of English verse and prose," and together they strove to purify our literary language of archaizing and artificiality. Hemingway is inconceivable without Ford, and the most cursory comparison of *The Good Soldier* with the novels of Henry James shows that progress is occasionally possible even in the affairs of men.

Like Matthew Arnold, Ford had a faith in literature that came close to idolatry, although unlike Arnold he was a Christian. He had lofty ambitions, few of which he ever realized, and vast pretensions, which his friends found both irritating and amusing. He was a byword for anecdotes in which he had the last word at the expense of the brilliant and powerful, and there has hardly ever been a tribute to him that did not dwell upon his unreliability. Pound appalled Wyndham Lewis by taking Ford at his own valuation, but Ezra, although more severe as a critic, shared Ford's generous enthusiasms for the things they liked: "As a critic he was perhaps wrecked by his wholly unpolitic generosity. . . . Despite all his own interests, despite all the hard-boiled and half-baked vanities of all the various lots of us, he kept on discovering merit with monotonous regularity."

Ford's unreliability was a reflection of this "impolitic generosity," which could look through a writer's personal and technical flaws to find whatever lay buried. The virtues he discovered in Pound and D. H. Lawrence he also discerned in himself, and who is to blame him? I cannot think of a good writer whose fictions do not begin with his own life and character. But Ford understood himself and his limitations better, perhaps, than his critics realized. Fairly early in his career (in 1908), in a letter to Edward Garnett, who had been gossiping about his shortcomings, he wrote: "I can't help my Olympian manner; it is due to a consciousness of high aims defended by a defiance concerning a conviction of miserable achievements tempered by resignation to the inevitability of failure and yr. Race (is it?), wh. won't believe in high aims, observes smallness of achievement & hates resignation of any kind."

Ford's view of 20th-century literature was ambivalent. Striving for a plainness of language and perfection of form, he fostered the diverse talents of Lawrence and Hemingway, but he looked back with nostalgia to the giants of his youth: Hardy, Meredith, W.H. Hudson, and the isolated geniuses of the *fin de siècle*, Conrad and James. In his longing for literary society, he spent his time visiting writers and went to the great trouble of founding and editing two reviews—the most thankless task of which a literary man is capable—but he looked back with fondness to the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood whose intimacy haunted him to the end. The English writers of his youth, he complained, had been like so many isolated mountains, each of which attracted devotees, but between them there was hardly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

any travel, much less communication.

Ford was not uncritical of Rossetti et Co., except, perhaps for Christina, whom he regarded as a saint. Looking back to their generation, he blamed them for leading English poets astray. Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel* had the effect of "the numbing blow of a sandbag," in convincing writers that "writing was a matter of digging for obsolete words with which to express ideas forever dead and gone." Ford's obsession with plain language was his answer to the artifice of the decadents, but he also realized that his own generation of writers, however much they might improve upon their elders, could never be the "mountains" that Hardy and Conrad were, simply because they were not as lofty. Welcoming each stylistic innovation and new eccentricity, he still looked back in awe at the terrifying giants of the previous century. The new age was marked by every kind of advance in comfort and decency, and yet, in his 1911 memoir *Memories and Impressions*, he could not avoid the elegiac note:

> We are unifying and unifying and unifying. We are standardizing ourselves and we are doing away with everything that is outstanding. . . . We are making a great many little people more cheerful and more bearable in their material circumstances. We are knocking for the select few the flavor of the finer things out of life. And the finer the flavor the longer we take to get used to it. So that that is going, and many, many, many little pleasures are coming. Whether you like it or whether you do not depends solely on yourself.

The note of humble skepticism at the end is typical of Ford, who as a Christian did not presume to declare what was best for other people. Welcoming all the liberal and progressive changes, including women's suffrage, which seemed to make life more bearable for ordinary people, his own cast of mind was aristocratic and even feudal. His greatest heroes are persons born into the wrong time and determined to live by an archaic code of honor that is shared by no one. In *Parade's End* Tietjens is abused and humiliated by a wife whom he continues to honor with chivalrous love, and he allows an intellectual and social inferior to claim credit for his own work. (Tony Last in Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* might be read as a comic parody.) His *Fifth Queen*, Katharine Howard, refuses to lie or politic even for the old religion; she despises both the reactionary Bishop Gardner and the timorous reformer, Archbishop Cranmer; she loves the king but would rather be his mistress than be party to a divorce; and she faithfully serves the Princess Mary, who alternately despises her and puts her life in danger; she loathes the men who would serve her interests, and she respects Thomas Cromwell for his single-minded devotion to King and Country, while yet hating him for his persecution of Catholics.

Ford was no sentimental reactionary, and he refused to blind himself either to the virtues of his own century or to the vices of the previous one. But the moral and spiritual decline he sensed even before the Great War, which is so often credited with demoralizing the upper classes of Britain and France, has proceeded inexorably. The periodic episodes of moral rearmament in the 1930's and 1950's were mere breathing-spaces dictated by circumstances like war and depression. So many years after Ford's death, we are tempted to look back nostalgically at recent periods that seem bright and sunny in comparison with these drab days, and there are times when I begin to get wistful for the halcyon years of Jimmy Carter.

There is nothing less useful or more perilous than short-term nostalgia, because the generation of our fathers is more irrevocably gone and less relevant to our life than the age of Dante. We may well be heading into a period of petty provincialism and bloody vendetta, when we shall need Dante as our guide as badly as he needed Vergil, but the quiet life of nuclear families in the suburbs, laughing at *I Love Lucy*, going godlessly to church, joining the PTA and Boy Scouts to make the world a better place for other people's children—that world is gone forever, and with it is gone the middle-brow literature of the old *New Yorker* and the Book of the Month Club. There is no mass readership for new Marquands or Chandlers, whose places have been taken by Tom Clancy, Stephen King, and Dean R. Koontz, "writers" whose one trick is the ability to titillate without entertaining.

The very people who complain so loudly about the pornographic art funded by the NEA go home at night to watch television programs whose immorality would have horrified D.H. Lawrence and to curl up with books whose style would have embarrassed a schoolboy addicted to penny dreadfuls. It cannot be pornography per se that offends so many Republicans, or even the misappropriation of their money, so much as it is art itself, the very possibility that there is a dimension of life they cannot enter or appreciate, blinded and blunted, as they are, by their exclusive devotion to the second-best things in life that only money can buy. I do not know which group is more disgusting, the spayed and neutered pets of the NEA or the sanctimonious philistines who have set themselves up as guardians of public morality.

For the most part, great works of literature are not created by geniuses living in isolation. That is the great Romantic fallacy, their response to the development of commercial publishing and mass literature, and each new generation of English poets, with a few exceptions like Tennyson and Frost, strove to distance itself from an increasingly brutalized public. Ford was right to condemn the preciosity of the pre-Raphaelites and decadents, and his argument can be applied to his favorite modern writers, James, Pound, and Eliot. But a serious writer is in the position of the worthy and honorable woman who has been jilted for a strumpet. She is tempted to mope, to adopt an austerity that seems to say, "I never really wanted him or any man. Mine is too fine a nature to endure the coarseness of physical love."

The tendency to see artists as isolated geniuses is doubly unfortunate, first, in tempting us to see signs of hope in the emergence of rare talents—like Eliot, Pound, and Hemingway after the Great War—and second, in blinding us to the truth that great art is almost always the expression of a wider community. A reading public or audience is the baseline that sets limits on the elevation of literary and artistic accomplishment. Geniuses arise in response to their community, and it is no accident that between Vergil and Dante stretch 14 centuries in which there are many pleasant hills and valleys but none of the mountain tops that only rise from the high plains of a national public.

The *Iliad* is nothing more than the common culture of the Greeks turned into art. A lesser people has to content itself with Barbara Allen, and Anglo-American literature would not have attempted to reach the level it did had there been no reading public whose taste was schooled on Vergil and Horace, although there are probably not more than a half dozen lyric

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poems in English worthy to be set beside an average Horatian ode. However, even the failures of English poetry are at a level higher than they might have been, if the only readers of verse had been illiterate stockjobbers with degrees in economics or business.

Ford wrote for that rarest of imaginary beings—more precious than the unicorn, more fatally mesmerizing than the basilisk, though by no means as indestructible as the hydra—the common reader, the man or woman who, through some flaw of character or upbringing, likes to read what others have written and has enough everyday learning to prize intelligence and craft above all the meretricious effects of the thrill-manipulators. If pressed, I might be able to provide some reasons why civilization and good language should be inextricably linked, but far more important than any *why* is the mere fact that they *are*. Tastes, of course, will vary from age to age—but even the rigidity of early 18th-century taste is an indication of the beautiful formality of that period, and if Coleridge could not properly appreciate Pope (nor, had their ages been reversed, Pope appreciate Coleridge), it does not mean that either poet did not write according to certain enduring and universal standards. That writers almost always fail to live up to their ideals only means that they have aimed sufficiently high. The abandonment of standards that marks all our postmodern literature is neither daring nor innovative, and it signifies nothing more interesting than effeminacy and sloth. We no longer have the energy to dress for dinner or calculate rhymes; so far from writing verse, we cannot even be put upon to read it.

There is a tedious literary debate on whether we are living still in the modern age, or have entered the postmodern age, or the post-postmodern age. This discussion, which would have delighted Ford, interests me no further than to observe that the hallmark of modernism in literature, the quality that is shared by such diverse writers as Pound and Proust, is an obsession with technique, a contempt for popular bourgeois standards, an ambition to make words do more they can do in our poor, uninflected languages. "Words slip, crack . . . perish under the strain." While the best of living writers remain, for the most part, modernists—Cormac McCarthy, for example, and George Garrett—most arty literature of the 90's represents not a continuation of the modernist impulse but a flight into inconsequence and solipsism. That nobody reads the literature published in literary reviews is a truism not worth repeating, but the reverse is also true: an educated readership (and by readership I am including critics, literature professors, and editors) would not tolerate what is passed off as poetry and fiction these days, and their demand for good writing would act like a magnet in drawing talent out of the obscurest corners of the English-speaking world.

Literary modernism *entre deux guerres* was the last mad charge of the serious artist against the hordes of vandals and huns whose wanton destruction has left hardly a blade of grass growing in their wake. Pound gave way to madness, Eliot grew ever more taciturn, and countless numbers of writers simply gave up—as a painter might cease to paint if all the world were suddenly blinded. Poor Ford, despite his generous enthusiasms for his contemporaries, despite all his plots and schemes for the advancement of himself as the leader of the modern school, despite the tributes from such diverse writers—to name only Americans—as Conrad Aiken, Louis Bromfield, Allen Tate, Glenway Wescott, and even Isabel Paterson—was already a fish out of water by the end of the Great War. He never ceased to write, and not all of his later, prodigious output is unworthy of him, but in his failure we can read the failure not only of his generation of writers but of the entire century. Rather than give way to despair, Ford had kept up his little fight for serious literature. Graham Greene summed him up in his obituary: "I don't suppose failure disturbed him much: he had never really believed in human happiness, his middle life had been made miserable by passion, and he had come through—with his humor intact, his stock of unreliable anecdotes, the kind of enemies a man ought to have, and a half-belief in a posterity which would care for good writing."

In this belief, Ford Madox Ford was less than half-wrong. There are readers and writers who care as much about good writing as about good cooking, but they, or rather we suffer from the realization of how few we are, how outnumbered, and how inadequate to the task. The ancient music theorist, Aristoxenus of Tarentum, commenting on the degeneracy of music and poetry in his own day (the late fourth century B.C.) compared his situation to that of the people of Poseidonium, Greeks who had lived long enough in Italy to forget their very Greekness. Once a year they gathered to celebrate their past and went away lamenting. So we few who appreciate the classics, he concluded, gather together to remember the way things used to be. Aristoxenus, who was a scholar and philosopher, could afford his Miniver Cheevyism. A writer cannot, and nothing has been so deadly as the acedia that comes with the recognition that all one's best efforts are probably futile. Ford never gave up, but he was lucky enough to die before the Second War. How long, I wonder, could he have kept up the act?

I remember back in my student days coming across a copy of Gregory of Tours' *Historia Francorum*. Writing in the late sixth century, Bishop Gregory apologized in advance for any mistakes he might make in his bad Latin—it was, as his own book revealed, a violent and barbarous age, little inclined to good letters. This, at least, is what I remember, for I have never put my hands on a copy since, and to check the quotation I should have to make an hour's drive to Madison, so barbarous is this city of 250,000 souls (the metro population) that its libraries contain so few good books. Ah, say the techno-prophets, books are obsolete and within a short time you will be able to find anything you want from the Internet. Perhaps. But who will pick the books that survive, and will that poor, pious barbarian be included? Who will type in the Latin? (Gregory's Latin is probably less barbaric than any translation made in our time, and if some librarian points to the Penguin edition on the shelf, I can only say QED.) And, what is more to the point, who, apart from a few thousand medievalists, will know enough to call it up and print it out, and which of them can read any Latin without the aid of a trot? Ford's Katherine Howard, a mere country girl, reads and writes Latin. In these barbarous times, the ability to write plain English is the rarest of accomplishments. It is denied to Presidents and their speech writers, to college professors and journalists, to novelists and poets. When I think of how well some of us might be able to write, if we took our craft seriously and if we really believed there were more than a few thousand people capable of appreciating the difference, and how far short we fall of our own limited ideals, I think of Poseidonium, whose people knew enough to mourn what they had lost. If you will go to Paestum (as it is now called), as Shelley did, and climb among the ruins of that insignificant Greek city, you will come away wondering if we shall ever give anyone cause to mourn our passing. ☙c

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TORTURE AND EXECUTION IN "DEATH & TAXES"

"... Jackson sticks it to the IRS and the Feds in "Death & Taxes", a hard-hitting reinvestigation..." -Derek Elly, Variety

"...a devastating and disturbing picture of America." -Sheila Whitaker, London Film Festival

Jeffrey F. Jackson's shocking film exposé tells the story of Gordon Kahl, a North Dakota farmer who became America's "most-wanted" fugitive.

How did a WWII hero become the target of one of the largest manhunts in FBI history? Was Kahl a gun-toting fanatic or a victim of the IRS? Did ***Bill Clinton*** conspire to cover-up his torture and execution?

DEATH & TAXES explores the myths and controversies surrounding a man who dared to challenge the IRS. The movie follows the documentary trail of Kahl as his body is exhumed for a new autopsy. Building on newsreel clips and eye witness accounts of the two fiery shoot-outs between Kahl and federal agents, ***DEATH&TAXES*** now reveals the true story.

TO ORDER CALL: 1-800-287-9477

or send $29.95 + $3.00 /shipping & handling to

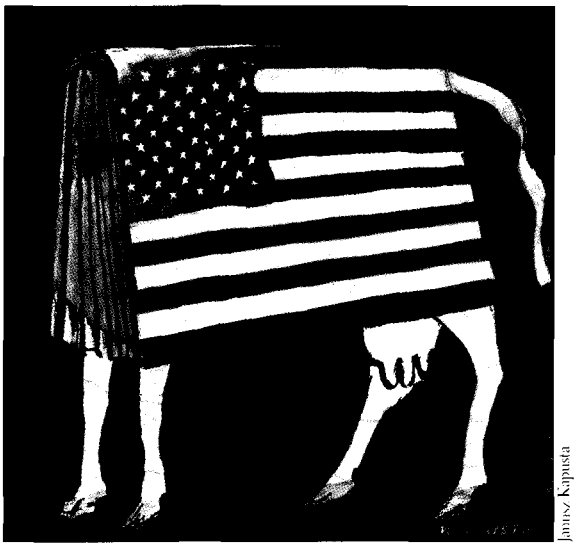
COUNTRY PEOPLE PRODUCTIONS
2554 Lincoln Blvd. Suite #456-1C
Marina Del Rey, CA 90291

SPECIAL EDITION (113 minutes/color/VHS video)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Country Writer

by Wendell Berry



James Kapusta

I am as grateful for this award as I am surprised by it, and I certainly did not see it coming. Obviously, it cannot be easy to feel worthy of an award bearing the name of T.S. Eliot, and so probably I ought to say that I am grateful, but unconvinced.

The etiquette attendant upon these occasions suggests that an award is a culmination, a recognition of work done. And that is true, of course, but to the awardee the matter is necessarily more complex. My wish today is to speak as steadfastly as I can from the point of view of the awardee. First, as I have already implied, the awardee had better allow for the possibility that he is being honored beyond his merit. He will recall that error in such a matter would not be without precedent. The awardee must next contend with the implications of the notion that he has "won" the award. The indispensable correction comes from William Blake: "I cannot think that Real Poets have any competition." And that can be taken in two ways: either one is a Real Poet and does not feel competitive, or one wishes to be a Real Poet and therefore had better try not to feel competitive. Either way, the awardee will remember that however solitary he may be in his work, his art is communal. The work of one writer is made possible by the work of fellow writers, past and present, and by the work of many others who are not or were not writers.

That thought leads the awardee to an embarrassing question—embarrassing because he must ask it, is even fascinated by it, but cannot answer it: Putting aside inheritance, influence, inspiration, and many years of instruction, criticism, advice, help, and comfort from friends and loved ones, who remains to receive the award?

Finally, the awardee must look with some uneasiness on the fact, inescapable for the awarders, that the award is a recognition of work done. He will be aware of the very lively distinction between "going to one's reward" and receiving an award. He must see the award as a sign of expectation, something still to measure up to—as he must see work done as evidence of the capacity to do work. Where he stands is in his ongoing life, a difficult place, for he knows (by the time he is my age he cannot help knowing) that he cannot live in what he has done. He can live only in what he is doing, and with satisfaction only if what he is doing binds him to an order of meaning, significant to others as to himself, not in his work but in the world. He stands, that is (and here the awardee rejoins the awarders), in need of hope.

Though I am in no position to say how validly, I believe that my work has been in large part an effort to sustain hope. It may be that this is merely the natural result of the perspective that I have necessarily written from: the perspective of a country person attached to a rural community and a rural landscape. That is to say that I have had no subject not in need of defense—in need of far more defense, in fact, than I and my predecessors and allies have been able to provide. Times when the political and business leaders of the country have been celebrating the success of the economy have looked to me like times of catastrophe, for that success has depended upon, has virtually required, the plundering of rural neighborhoods such as my own. This state of things confronts the country writer with a rather bald choice between acceding to the cynicism and contempt with which country people and country places are now generally regarded or taking up their defense. To assume the defensive in a (so far) losing cause is to involve oneself in a long confrontation with despair, and, if one is to survive, in a continuous survey of the ground of hope. I can say that my work has given me some hope, sometimes—and I know that those qualifications are dire. They mean simply that nobody can be the source of his or her own hope. We must look elsewhere.

I was distressed to read in a recent issue of the *New Yorker* that some of the younger Russian writers are now repudiating their great writers of opposition and persistent hope such as Tol-

Wendell Berry was the 1994 recipient of the Ingersoll Foundation's T.S. Eliot Award for Creative Writing, for which this was his acceptance speech.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stoy and Solzhenitsyn, whom they regard as representatives of a dead and irrelevant past. They have given up on hope, and they think they are better off. One of the new Russian writers said of a young man in Zurich who asked him to speak of hope: "I had no idea what this man meant! For me, literature is a game. I said, 'I'm afraid you've come to the wrong place for hope.' The poor guy. He'd have been better off in church."

Does the arrival of capitalism relieve writers of such responsibility? Many of our own writers evidently have come to the conclusion that it does. But what would such writers make of the example of Edward Abbey who, unaware perhaps of the redemption of capitalism, said of his own books: "They are meant to serve as antidotes to despair."

Edward Abbey's work could be described as the record of an uncynical and absolute devotion to the natural world, to a home landscape, and to the culture and tradition of freedom. This is a devotion that modern history perhaps inevitably brings to the edge of despair. Abbey's determination not to submit to hopelessness led him to write *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, the story of a band of people willing to *do* something to head off the destruction of their country. It is a better novel too than a lot of people think, who may be put off by its approval of violence to industrial machinery. An equally good novel approving of violence to people would now receive far more respect. The great virtue of Abbey's quartet of saboteurs is that they, like Abbey himself, acknowledge freely and without embarrassment their love for the things they are trying to save. From start to finish Abbey was determined to take lightly whatever his enemies took seriously, including himself, and so there is much laughter in his books, but literature to him was hardly a game. The makers of antidotes to despair tend to be well-acquainted with their opponent.

Another source of hope to me has been, and has been increasingly, the work of T.S. Eliot, and by that I mean not the poems and plays individually, but the whole course of his work, from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" to *The Elder Statesman*. I have had trouble finding anybody among my literary friends who thinks as highly of *The Elder Statesman* as I do, and yet I hold to my belief that, if it is read as the last of a series of works reaching always toward an elusive redemption, a pilgrimage of works, that play must be recognized as a triumph. At the beginning, even in the minor poems, we have the waste-land figures, a dismembered humanity, each one eccentric, alone, anxious, and troubled, tottering on the margin of an emptiness that is both within them and around them. And finally, by difficult stages, we arrive at the concluding scene of *The Elder Statesman*, which is a dialogue of lovers who are pledging themselves to one another. Eliot, who began with those marginal and fragmented inhabitants of the wasteland, obviously thinking himself one of them, has here made his way to the very heart of his faith and his tradition. The woman, Monica, speaks for him:

> Age and decrepitude can have no terrors for me,
> Loss and vicissitude cannot appall me,
> Not even death can dismay or amaze me
> Fixed in the certainty of love unchanging.

If the play were just a love story, it might be accused of sentimentality, but it is not just a love story: it is the story also of deception and confession, separation and atonement, sin and forgiveness. The survivors of the play's arduous winnowing, by forgiving and loving one another have put themselves within the reach of a love far greater, more compassionate, and more forgiving than their own. And this also Monica confesses to her lover: "Before you and I were born, the love was always there / That brought us together."

But the play is hope-giving, I think, not just in its message so unabashedly stated at the end, but also in its correct identification of the source of hope in small things such as family relationships. The elder statesman, Lord Claverton, finds his redemption in putting things right between himself and his son and daughter, not in the great accomplishments of his public life. This of course follows the Gospels' insistence that peace with one's brother, peace even with one's enemy, must come before peace with God. And it follows Confucius' axiom, "The government of the state is rooted in family order."

That ancient wisdom—summed up perhaps in the saying that charity begins at home—is a good guide because it connects feeling with practice, reducing the scale of work and placing it within the reach of affection. One of the characteristic losses of our age has been in the reduction of hope, along with faith and love, to mere feeling, an event of "body chemistry." We seem to have mostly forgotten that these were once thought of as paramount virtues, requiring practice. It is nevertheless true that hope, if it is to be authentic and if it is to last, must find its work, and this must be doable work, work that one can reasonably expect to accomplish.

This way of thinking, which may be necessary to our survival as human beings, goes directly against the current of our public education and public ambition, which never contemplate the propriety or the desirability or the pleasure of work on a small scale. We do not want to find small answers to small problems, or partial answers to parts of problems; we want to find heroic answers, global answers to global problems. We tell our children, "You can be everything you want to be," which is, in every case, a lie. We believe that we are entitled to large, spectacular, perfect solutions invented by scientists or politicians. We believe that we all ought to work in an office and receive a large salary.

The result, altogether expectable, is work done poorly by people who think themselves too good to do it. The result is disappointment, cynicism, bitterness, boredom, contempt for ordinary life and ordinary pleasures—a state of mind that has afflicted both life and art.

The result is what my friend Wes Jackson calls "the ain't-it-awful conversation"—a conversation that Wes says we have got to get out of. But we cannot get out by yet more fatuous self-regard, or by dreaming more of our over-stuffed dreams. We can get out by hoping for the right things, and by doing promptly and as well as we can the modest work that our hope requires.

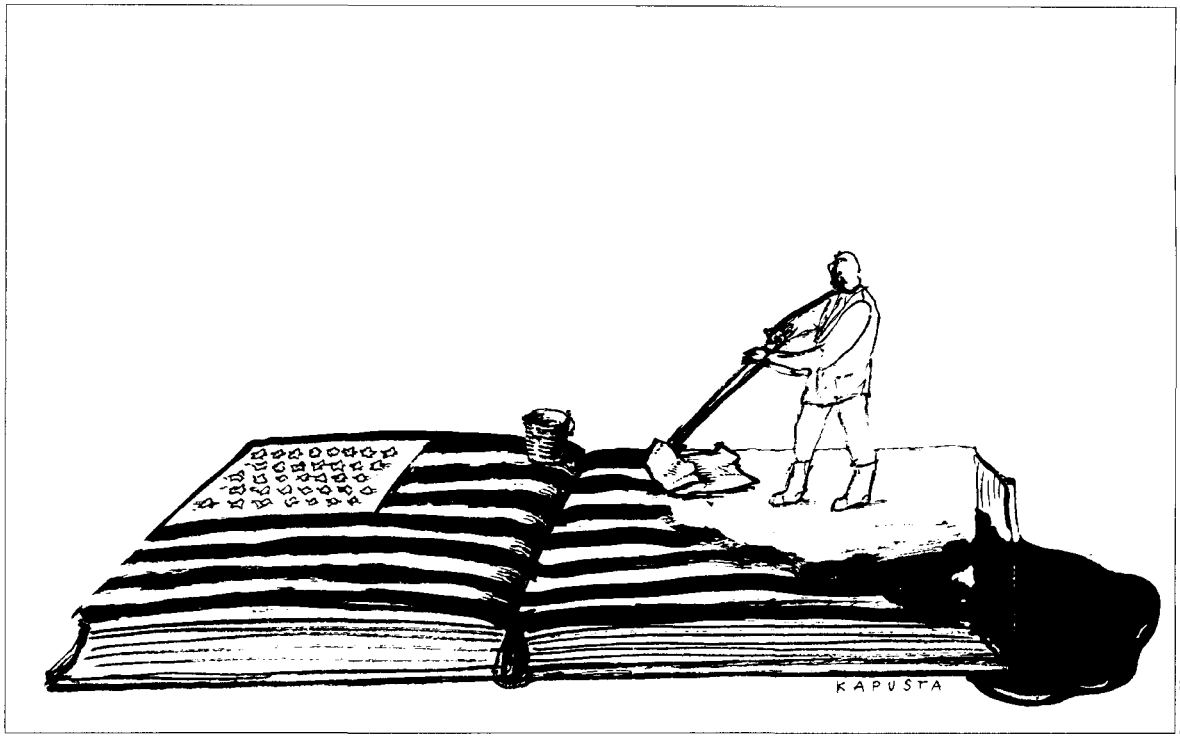
Lately, as a sort of emblem of my own hope, I have been thinking of a farmer in a poem by the Welsh poet, R.S. Thomas. The farmer, Job Davies, 85 years old, is mowing grass with a scythe early in the morning and he is talking to himself:

> What to do? Stay green.
> Never mind the machine,
> Whose fuel is human souls.
> Live large, man, and dream small.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cleaning Our Stables

by Gore Vidal



Janusz Kapusta

In the mindless babble that passes for political debate in the United States, nothing means what it appears to mean, particularly those key words "liberal" and "conservative." For political purposes the latter seems to have demonized the former. But has this really happened? Americans tend to be divided by race, religion, and class. The idea of a political idea is alien to our passionate folk, and that is why Karl Marx and his admirers could never get through to so thoughtless a polity while neither Tom Paine nor Tom Jefferson made much impact. So-called liberals—always for some mysterious reason called "so-called" by conservatives; does this mean that conservatives want to be thought of as *true* liberals?—want to extend democracy as well as see to it that the Bill of Rights applies to everyone and that the Declaration of Independence, a truly radical liberal document, be heeded so that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness can be made available to each American, even William Safire.

I would have thought that all of this was fairly simple, but now, thanks to television and to a myriad of religious and political demagogues, our average citizen is demonstrably the most ignorant in the First World, knuckles heavily calloused from too close a contact with the greensward as he lurches from error to error, all the while hating niggers and fags and uppity women and whatever else was put in his trough that week. Currently Americans are roughly divided between reactionaries and fascists (admittedly the latter involves a degree of thought and might be too difficult for TV-calloused brains). Officially, what passes for conservatism at this time is, at best, a liking for the status quo if the citizen has money and, at worst, a hatred of minorities if he doesn't—*they* are always the reason why he is income-challenged.

For years Bill Kauffman, the sage of Batavia, has been trying to make sense of our political scene. He has labored long in the Augean stable, and though he is no Hercules, he has cleaned out an interesting corner or two. By studying our history—something that is not allowed in Academe, say, while the media are past-less—he has latched on to some interesting facts (as opposed to opinions) that completely turn inside out the tedious liberal versus conservative debate, or grunting contest. He has discovered that from Jefferson to the Party of the People at the end of the last century (members known, for short, as populists) the strain of liberalism was a powerful one in our affairs. Extend the democracy, the literal meaning of liberalism, was very much a populist ideal despite the racism and sexism endemic to the Southern and Southwestern poor farmers and other mechanicals who followed the likes of William Jennings Bryan. The conservatives of the Atlantic seaboard were status quo types, quite happy to own the banks that collected the interest on farm mortgages. The rise of Bryan terrified them. Revolution was at hand. They fought back and, as one wrote to another in 1898, "A small war might take the people's mind off our economic problems."

Kauffman is at his best when he illuminates that most insidious word "isolationism." The people, in those days, were very much aware of their own true interests. They wanted access to

---

This essay was written as the preface to Bill Kauffman's recently released book America First! *Gore Vidal's most recent book is* The City and the Pillar and Seven Early Stories *(Random House).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cheap money. They wanted to be allowed to live their own lives without interference from government. They wanted no part of the foreign wars that the moneyed conservative Eastern class so much enjoyed and benefited from. The people knew that they were the ones who would do the dying while the friends of Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and the last half-dozen Oval Ones (oddities to a man) made the money. The people at large took seriously George Washington's warning against foreign entanglements. Mind our own business which is business was his advice and so remains the centerpiece of the true liberal doctrine.

With Franklin Roosevelt, the words were reversed. Because, during the short-term New Deal, he had made some liberal reforms (Social Security), he was thought to be liberal, but at heart he was a traditional Eastern conservative, with a love of foreign wars inherited from his first employer, Woodrow Wilson, and from his cousin Theodore before that. The people, instinctively liberal in these matters, and their tribunes wanted no part of either the first or the second world wars. So the conservative media, generally anglophile, painted the liberal majority of the country as racist dullards who would not take part in profitable foreign adventures for fear of being killed. The word "isolationist" became synonymous with Southern racism and rural backwardness. The conservative minority defeated the liberal majority, as we all know. Two deadly wars were fought. From the first we got, aside from the dead and wounded, 15 years of the Prohibition of alcohol which turned the whole country lawless as well as an all-out assault on the Bill of Rights that has continued, with occasional truces (the Warren Court), until this morning.

From the second war we got a permanently militarized economy which, to date, has given us four trillion dollars worth of debt and a worn-out infrastructure which can no longer be repaired unless the economy is demilitarized, something our conservative rulers do not want to do and the liberal majority doesn't know how to do. An essential part of the militarized economy is the enormously profitable "war" on drugs which must always be fought but never, ever won. There would be no problem, of course, if the Prohibition were repealed, a liberal notion, of course.

So we end up with all the key political words turned inside out, and once that happens, as Confucius wisely noted, no state is governable since the people cannot understand their rulers and the rulers cannot understand themselves, much less the people. Meanwhile, we must preserve the free world (actually unfree; we have elections but no politics) from—let's see, Kim Il Sung's son and his atomic armada; and then there is Haiti, where we must restore order and justice and freedom as we did when Franklin Roosevelt invaded the island (he was in the Navy Department at the time, and one of the bizarre lies that he liked to tell ever after was how he, personally, had written the excellent constitution of Haiti). Perhaps Gulf War II might be useful, to justify the military budget and the taxes that now go almost entirely for "Defense" (Social Security income and outgo are separate from the budget, a fact that is kept permanently secret from the taxpayers who are supposed to respond in a Pavlovian way to "wasteful people programs").

Let us hope that Kauffman's ideas start to penetrate and that the potential mind-our-own-business liberal majority will come to its senses and convert a military to a peacetime economy before we end up with a glamorous Brazilian economy and political system as well as, to be fair, a Brazilian-class soccer team.

©

Old Newport

by Rudolph Schirmer

The sea is where we left it
And I'm glad to say
The maple has not moved,
Nor has the mansion strayed.

But something unforeseen
Of old is now beheld,
Experienced, applauded—
A superb suspension,

Ruler over water,
Spanner of the gap,
Rising, arching, promising
High transit, safe and sound.

If you could count the leaves,
Would there be less or more?
No matter; they express
Forever, as we did—

And do. No cleavage, now
That memory reveals
What it preserved: the amaranthine prototypes

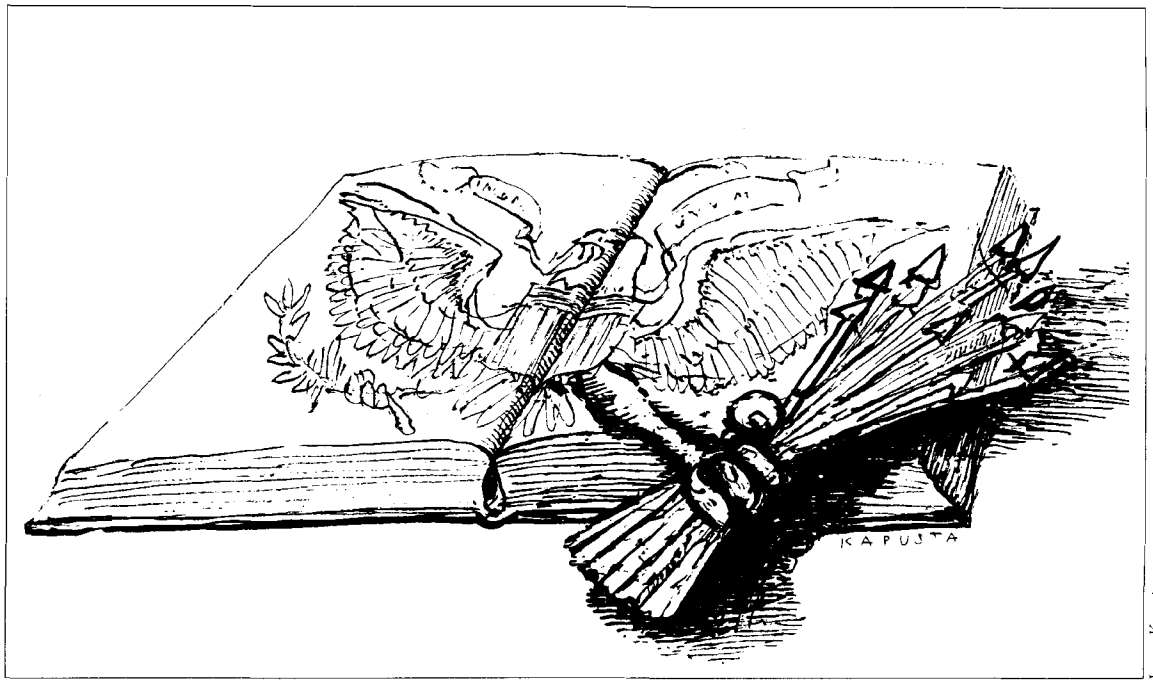
Of timeless you and me,
Replete and unforsworn,
Returning to rekindle
Paraphrastic sparks,

Revisiting a banished
Habitat to learn:
All *is* as it will be
When Now and Then are one.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Once Upon a Time in America

by Bill Kauffman



Janusz Kapusta

One of the strangest rituals in the United States Senate is the annual reading of President Washington's Farewell Address. The chore of recitation usually falls to a freshman nonentity eager to curry favor by performing what is regarded as a drudge task. The chamber is empty, save for the classical remnant: New York's Senator Moynihan and West Virginia's Robert Byrd, the pomaded knight from the mountaineer state, who, with his florid defenses of American sovereignty and the Daughters of the Confederacy and the United States Constitution (as opposed to the Republican pollsters' Contract with America) has become something of a statesman. "I do not see in front of this chamber the U.N. flag," Byrd told the Senate during the Bush-Clinton Somalia debacle. "I never saluted the U.N. flag. I saluted Old Glory, the American flag."

This is a homey patriotism that traitors can never understand; which, indeed, they sneer at. It is of a piece with the remark by Wild Bill Langer of North Dakota during the original NATO debate that "when a Senator casts his vote in favor of the Atlantic Pact, in favor of getting us mixed up in all the problems of European nations, that Senator says to the American people, 'I know more about things than George Washington ever knew.'"

For saying this Langer was deemed a provincial idiot. The real fools, though, are the Honorables who every February read Washington's Farewell Address, with its injunctions against "overgrown military establishments" and "permanent alliances with any portion of the world" and "excessive partiality for one foreign nation," which leads to a disastrous situation wherein "real patriots who may resist the intrigues of the favorite are liable to become suspected and odious." (Whichever favorite can he mean?) After this perfunctory nod, the Senate spends the next 364 days of the year repudiating the Father of our Country. Or as an insurrectionist shouts in *Caesar's Column* (1891), Ignatius Donnelly's dystopian novel of late 20th-century America: "We are a republic in name; free only in forms."

The substantial public dissatisfaction with the New World Order suggests that Americans remain essentially Washingtonian in their reluctance to subjugate distant brown people, subsidize distant white people, and subserve distant yellow people. (By the way, why is it that those who *object* to killing foreigners are the ones called xenophobes?)

A Potomac chin-puller recently boasted to *Time* magazine that for half a century "only a bipartisan consensus among elites kept the country's latent isolationism at bay." This consensus has been enforced, in part, by smearing any outlaw who holds, with Wild Bill Langer, that the counsel of George Washington contains more wisdom than the effluvial pool of the Newt Gingrich-Clark Clifford Party. We have been taught, in Gore Vidal's phrase, that the price of freedom is eternal discretion.

"Well," as the song goes, "how did we get here?" One hundred and one years ago a Nebraska congressman was defeated in his bid to represent his state in the United States Senate. So he

---

Bill Kauffman is the author of Every Man A King, Country Towns of New York, *and* America First! *This article was given as a speech at the 1994 meeting of the John Randolph Club.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

became chief of the editorial staff of the *Omaha World Herald*; two years later he stirred the hearts of Democratic conventioneers in Chicago with an address that, come the revolution, will be read in the Senate every July 9:

> Ah, my friends, we say not one word against those who live on the Atlantic coast, but the hardy pioneers who have braved all the dangers of the wilderness, who have made the desert to blossom as the rose—the pioneers away out there, who rear their children near to Nature's heart, where they can mingle their voices with the voices of the birds—out there where they have erected schoolhouses for the education of their young, churches where they praise their Creator, and cemeteries where rest the ashes of their dead—these people, we say, are as deserving of the consideration of our party as any people in this country. It is for these that we speak. We do not come as aggressors. Our war is not a war of conquest; we are fighting in the defense of our homes, our families, and posterity. We have petitioned, and our petitions have been scorned; we have entreated, and our entreaties have been disregarded; we have begged, and they have mocked when our calamity came. We beg no longer; we entreat no more; we petition no more. We defy them.

Thus spake William Jennings Bryan.

In 1900 a ten-year-old boy in Rochester, New York, named Henry W. Clune heard candidate Bryan speak. The Clunes were a prosperous family, stalwart Republicans, yet Bryan's vision incorporated them in a way it might not have two decades earlier. By succumbing to the imperialist temptation—over the objections of his Ohio advisors, especially William Rufus "Good" Day of Ravenna—President McKinley galvanized an anti-imperialist movement that was breathtaking in its breadth. From prairie populist to Main Street shopkeeper, from Henry James to Mark Twain: defenders of the Old Republic were legion. They would, in time, include the young Bryan auditor Master Clune.

On February 8 my friend Henry W. Clune celebrated his 105th birthday—with a martini and his dog-eared collection of Addison. I have described Henry in these pages ("Henry and Louise in the Lair de Clune," August 1991) as probably the most rooted writer in the history of American letters. Novelist, historian, and (according to the *Saturday Evening Post*) the most popular local newspaper columnist in midcentury America, Henry was also a classic Main Street Republican. (He did recently confess to me, with a conspiratorial wink, that in 1920 he voted for the noble Eugene V. Debs of Terre Haute, Indiana, because the Socialists knew the score on the war.)

Henry was a fixture on the pages of the Rochester *Democrat & Chronicle* for more than 50 years; in 1940 and 1966 he penned some of the most blistering criticisms of the War Party I have ever read. His theme, in both wars, was the way in which militarism corrodes our soul. He came to agree with his Upstate New York compatriot Edmund Wilson that the government of these United States had become "self-intoxicated, homicidal and menacing."

And in retaliation . . . nothing. Henry was untouched. Oh, his America First columns drew the fire of a few typewriter hawks perched at the University of Rochester (though the University's president, Alan Valentine, was a prominent isolationist); still, Henry suffered no infamy: his reputation in Rochester was unsmirchable. He knew everyone in town, from the late George Eastman to the ticket-taker in the burlesque hall, and as a result the Smear Bund was powerless. The lesson I draw from this is that dissent is possible, even protected, within an America of distinct and self-confident towns, cities, and regions; an America in which Rochester and Richmond and Omaha and San Francisco are more than administrative units of the New World Order.

Today, the Rochester *Democrat & Chronicle* is run by remote control from the Gannett Corporation's headquarters in occupied Virginia. Frank Gannett, Henry's boss and friend, was an inquisitive—and, alas, acquisitive—farmboy, and vain withal, but nonetheless he was an American, first, as were most publishers and editors. Not so today, when foreigners own and edit so many of our magazines, interpreting our lives for us and displacing American collaborationists as the brains, so to speak, of the Vital Center. The command barked out by these imperious imperialists is, in the words of a recent *Economist* editorial, "You can't go home." Oh yes we can—and we would appreciate it if your agents would do likewise.

(Speaking of our transatlantic tourists and their brochures, Thomas Hart Benton, Old Bullion, the Jacksonian senator from what the Rainmakers called the great state of Misery, wrote Martin Van Buren in 1851, "Have you read Tocqueville? He is the authority in Europe and with the federalists here and will be with our posterity if they know nothing but what the federalists write." Interesting, is it not, that whenever sinister political celebrities reach back to that misty, hazy, prehistoric America prior to 1941, the only guy they ever quote is a French vagabond?)

But back to Henry W. Clune, our upright avatar of the America that was, and ought to be. Henry's novel *Monkey on a Stick* was the uncredited—though not unremunerated—source of Frank Capra's movie *Meet John Doe*. Capra—like Henry and so many other hale Americans—loathed Franklin D. Roosevelt. Capra and FDR were really antitheses: the Sicilian boy dressed in rags who sold papers to put himself through Caltech and the lazy child of the patriciate, mocked by his arch cousin Alice as "Nancy"; the artist who saw his creation (Longfellow Deeds) as "the living symbol of the deep rebellion in every human heart—a growing resentment against being compartmentalized," and the lying politician whose sympathies were always with the raw steel-toed-boot-to-the-head power of the state. Capra loved and respected women, coaxing outstanding performances from shy actresses Jean Arthur and Donna Reed; FDR married his shy cousin—and then cheated on her.

The gap between rulers and ruled can be measured in a thousand anecdotal ways. My maternal great-grandmother, an immigrant from Northern Italy, cursed FDR for blackening the final years of her life. Two of her sons were conscripted into Mr. Roosevelt's Army to kill or be killed by foreigners who, however depraved their rulers, had never done them any harm. (Or as a great Kentucky pugilist once put it, "I ain't got no quarrel with no Viet Cong.")

My great-grandmother's attitude, and that of so many Americans in both world wars, was expressed by a character in Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel*: "It's not our fight. I don't want to send my boys three thousand miles across the sea to get shot for those foreigners. If they come over here, I'll shoulder a gun with the best of them, but until they do they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can fight it out among themselves."

Fittingly, the deciding vote in favor of the 1941 draft extension, which passed the House 203-202, was cast by the fox-hunting lord of the Genesee Valley, Congressman James W. Wadsworth, Jr., who for bucking his party and authorizing the abduction of thousands of his farmboy constituents won the obscene sobriquet "Conscience of the House." The Wadsworths were famous for their superciliousness: they once fired an uppity hired hand who dared purchase a Model T. But wops and micks and appleknockers made fine fodder for the war machine, and though my great-grandmother died of a broken heart, her beloved sons thousands of miles removed . . . well, such is the price of being a Great Power. Empire kills and Empire deracinates.

Proverbs promises that when a wicked man dies, his hope perishes, and all he expected from his power comes to nothing, and I suppose we can take solace that Hitler and Stalin are playing Risk in Hell and FDR is playing with his toy boats in, at best, Purgatory.

Once upon a time in America there existed political figures who spoke for the tens of millions of normal Americans—Henry Clune Republicans, Paulina Stella Democrats, Frank Capra populists—who did not want to squander blood and treasure in un-American wars on distant shores. This was, in fact, the original rainbow coalition: black Americans have generally been wholesomely isolationist, and for the last two decades virtually the only congressional opposition to foreign aid and our never-ending series of massacres of dark-skinned people has come from the black left. (The Haiti occupation has little support among ordinary blacks; it is the fever dream of the bootlicking Uncle Toms of the Ron Brown Democracy.)

One of Henry Clune's contemporaries, the late poet-folklorist Carl Carmer of Oak Orchard, just up the road from me, rhymed:

Late June he died
Don't mourn, said she
Things keep on
That folks don't see

Good old American isolationism has kept on, and will keep on keeping on as long as we have enough "insubordinate Americans," to use Robert Frost's self-description, who still value the importance of "doin' your own thing in your own time," as those two deeply American filmmakers Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda (our Kansas-Nebraska Act-ors) said in their wonderful movie about the perdurability of pioneer virtues, *Easy Rider*.

What we need to do is find our way back to an America in which a William Jennings Bryan and a Henry Clune understand just how common are their interests as freeborn Americans aligned against a ruling class whose rapacity and bloodlust will not be sated until every last Angolan and aborigine and Abyssinian is either dead or watching *Ricki Lake*, and every American native is disarmed, docile, and ductile, pledging allegiance to the U.N. flag and never forgetting, as the scent of charred flesh from the Waco holocaust drifts across the land, that there, but for the grace of Boutros Boutros-Ghali, go you, white trash.

An incendiary band of the late 1970's used to end its chaotic concerts with a declaration—"we mean it, man"—that applies to us as well, and explains why we, the faithful sons of Bryan and Mencken, of Lindbergh and Debs, of John C. Calhoun and Silas Wright, of Robert A. Taft and Thomas P. Gore, are all outlaws in the eyes of our un-American rulers. Because in our fealty to our American ancestors, our steadfastness in upholding the flags of the 13 stars and the coiled rattlesnake, our dedication to a peaceful America of healthy self-confident regions, untainted by militarism, untempted by imperialism, we are, as Anne Morrow Lindbergh described Senator Wheeler and his wife, "American, American, American." And we mean it, man. ©

LIBERAL ARTS

JUDICIAL TYRANNY IN CALIFORNIA

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, federal judge Mariana R. Pfaelzer has ordered the state of California to post notices at schools, medical clinics, and welfare offices stating that Proposition 187 will not be enforced before a hearing can be held on the legality of the initiative. Pfaelzer issued this injunction at the request of the ACLU, which feared that illegal immigrants might not know that they still qualify for many services paid for by the public. Of course, the statewide notices will be posted at public expense.

Upon learning of Pfaelzer's injunction, Horacio Grana, a legal immigrant from Mexico, wrote her a letter decrying her lack of respect for the voters who overwhelmingly approved Proposition 187. "What I do not understand," he said, "is that if we pay the salaries of judges that represent the laws of our nation, how is it possible that judges like yourself . . . attempt to support those people that break our laws? . . . I feel that you are not aware that you are the one who is committing unconstitutional acts."

After reading Grana's letter, Pfaelzer dispatched Federal Marshals to investigate and question the citizen. "What are you guys," asked Grana's friend Glen Spencer, "the Gestapo?"

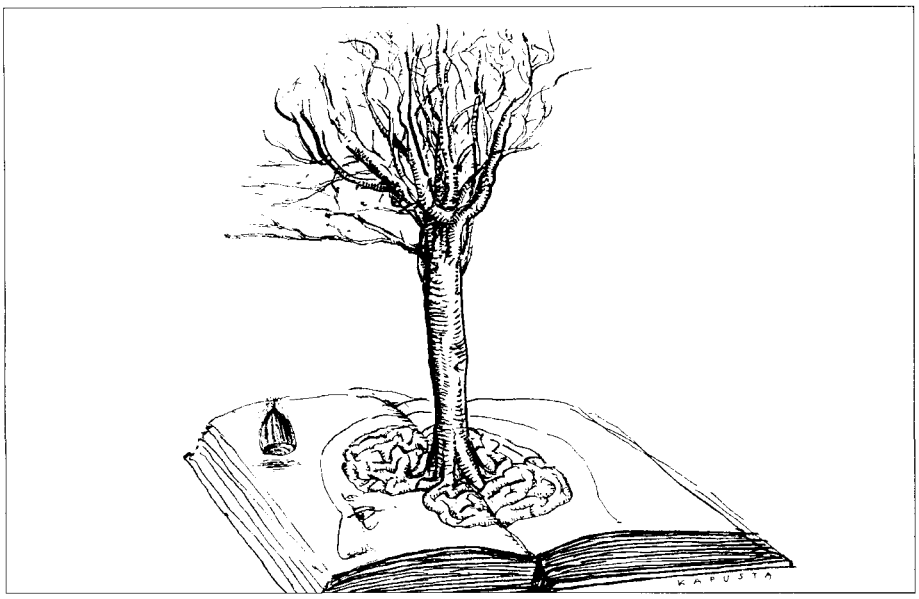
Meanwhile, another federal judge in California, Stephen V. Wilson, barred the government from deporting two members of the terrorist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, on the grounds that classified information about their membership in the organization had not been turned over to the two men. Eligible for deportation under a 1990 law, they will nonetheless be permitted to remain in the United States. "It's a great decision," said David Cole, a lawyer at the Center for Constitutional Rights in Manhattan.

—*Ruth Coffey*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Frederick Turner and the Rebirth of Literature

by Paul Lake



Janusz Kapusta

The breach that opened between the serious and popular arts during the early years of this century has so widened over subsequent decades that the current "postmodern" era is characterized by a kind of cultural schizophrenia. While visual images bombard us through the media, the graphic arts have increasingly evaporated in performance and conceptual art. While recordings go platinum and rock and rap concerts draw huge audiences throughout the world, serious music haunts university music departments like a guilty specter. While popular novels sell by the millions and poetry is read on campuses and in coffee shops from Maine to California, serious literature is increasingly slighted by popular journals and ignored by the public. Published in limited editions and rarely reviewed, poetry is all but dead as a cultural force.

Not coincidentally, it was during this period that the term "serious" art became synonymous with "avant-garde"; that T.S. Eliot's dictum that modern art should be difficult came to imply that art should be impenetrable to ordinary readers. Even serious, ambitious works of art that lack a certain requisite level of difficulty are accorded an ambiguous status in our culture, so that, for instance, novels by distinguished writers such as Alison Lurie and John Updike elicit guilt and embarrassment in sophisticated readers similar to that produced by movies and popular songs. However much we enjoy them, we feel ashamed for submitting to the seductive pleasures of well-constructed plots and for being drawn into the lives of well-drawn, middle-class characters. Serious literature, we have been taught, is supposed to advance the technical experiments begun by Eliot, Woolf, Joyce, and Stein in the heyday of Modernism. It is supposed to be hard and somewhat painful, like a visit to the dentist.

This mixture of guilt and embarrassment is one of the hallmarks of the postmodern era. Narrative, poetic meter, tonality, visual representation—because they remind us of the crude symmetries of our vulgar mammalian bodies—appear in postmodern art, if at all, as parody or pastiche.

At the same time, the historical relation between art and criticism has been altered. Criticism—or critical theory, as we have learned to call it—is no longer ancillary to the arts, but a vast, sophisticated mechanism of equal or greater prestige. Critical theory has even spawned a new species of writing as abstract and antiseptic as its own jargon—"language writing," or "language poetry," as it is called—writing so sterile and empty of human content that it can be said not to have readers, only writers and critics.

One such critic, Marjorie Perloff, in her book *Radical Artifice* has championed avant-garde "language writing" precisely because it refuses any concessions to the vulgar reader, setting itself up in opposition to the language of popular media. Perloff argues that in an age of ubiquitous electronic babble, language writing replaces naive imitations of a debased natural speech with its own "radical artifice," and that while such writing might initially repel the reader, its very difficulty and unpopularity are proof of its authenticity.

For readers unfamiliar with it, here is what one version of language writing looks like. I have chosen the lines at random from a poem entitled "PCOET" by David Melnick, from George Hartley's *Textual Politics and the Language Poets*:

seta
colecc
puilse, i
canoe
its spear heieo
as Rea, cinct pp
pools we sly drosp
Geianto

(o sordea, oweedsea!)

Poetry this disembodied could embarrass no one. Written not so much to please a reader as to provide an academic critic with an occasion for an essay, the poem might be said not fully

---

Paul Lake is a professor of English and Creative Writing at Arkansas Tech University and author, most recently, of the satirical thriller Among the Immortals *(Story Line Press).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to exist until joined symbiotically to a critical text. Yet even a poem as aseptic as "PCOET" bears some relation to the poetry of the past: with some effort, you can read it or say it aloud. Its origin in the human body has not been fully eradicated. Consequently, the avant-garde has already moved on to bolder, more radical experiments. For, as George Hartley points out, poetry no longer has to limit itself to sounds produced by human vocal cords: the tape recorder has "provided a way out of this limitation of the human body." Hartley cites a passage by another language poet, Steve McCaffery, who celebrates a new tool, electronic tape, because, he argues, it "liberates composition from the athletic sequentiality of the human body, pieces may be edited, cutting, in effect, becomes the potential compositional basis in which segments can be arranged and rearranged outside of real time performance."

Having fractured the literary atom—the word—the literary avant-garde is now engaged in smashing its subatomic particles in order to manufacture a poetry of pure sound bites. Similar developments have taken place within the other arts. But this progressive smashing of traditional artistic forms and genres—along with the routine introduction of randomness and chaos into artistic compositions of all sorts—has left us at the end of the 20th century with a number of vexing questions: Where does art go from here? How far can the arts advance before they are completely estranged from any but a professional audience? Why must "serious" art be so cold and inhuman—or conversely, so arch and frivolous, so free of deep human concern? Why must we sneak off guiltily to the movies to enjoy a good story, turn on our stereo to hear lyrics with meter and rhyme, tune in country and pop radio stations to hear singable melodies?

Some answers to these questions have recently begun to emerge, and from a surprising source: modern science. Frederick Turner, a poet and thinker of remarkable intelligence and originality, has used much of this newly emerging scientific information to fashion a powerful critique of the postmodern aesthetic. Tracing modern art's destructive tendencies to a number of historical developments and widely held myths, Turner suggests a way out of our cultural impasse and charts a new path for the arts.

In an essay entitled "Beyond Destructive Art" (from *Rebirth of Value*), Turner argues that for the past two centuries developments in science have resulted in new ideas concerning human freedom and creativity. In science's early stages, Turner writes, freedom appeared to be problematic because physics and mathematics "were capable at that time of observing and recording only one kind of process—that is the deterministic and predictable kind." Since the universe appeared to be largely deterministic, art took on the task of asserting human freedom by seizing onto the "alternative to determinism that science so unwisely offered—disorder, destruction, unrule." Consequently, the forms and traditions of the arts—which had their being in time and space and appeared to constitute yet another set of determinative principles—were systematically dismantled and destroyed.

Later, in this century, when quantum theory was developed, artists and theorists seized onto its discoveries, too. The apparent randomness that appeared in the behavior of subatomic particles, the loss of certainty that accompanied the development of quantum mechanics, seemed to offer an alternative to determinism. Chance and disorder were therefore introduced into modern artistic compositions. The late John Cage, for instance, has used the I Ching and computers to generate the chance elements he routinely (and predictably) introduces into his musical compositions, poems, and lectures.

A second force that contributed to the destruction of the arts was the economic revolution that occurred when the world changed from an economy based on husbandry and the use of renewable resources to one in which, Turner writes, "we essentially mined and burned our raw materials to produce goods." Combustion became the model of artistic creation, and when it did, Turner suggests, our artistic traditions were considered "as a fuel to be strip-mined and destroyed to release [their] stored energy."

Turner identifies a third, less frequently noticed influence on modern art: the radical demographic change that occurred as populations exploded with the rise of industrialization. He writes:

> One consequence of this huge increase in world population . . . has been the creation of huge ungovernable populations of adolescent youths at the most volatile and unstable stages of national economic development in most societies. These populations . . . wrought irreversible changes on the societies upon which they were visited. One of them was to fix the oedipal stage of rebellion against parental authority as the governing and archetypal posture of liberation and creativity. . . . Artistic creativity is therefore associated with the adolescent style of conformist rebellion . . .

"The result for art," Turner concludes, "was what Virginia Woolf, in *A Room of One's Own*, sadly describes as a sterile masculinization of modernist art." Ezra Pound's Bohemianism, Beat rebellion of the 50's, and punk rock nihilism of the 70's might be regarded as successive versions of this juvenile masculine aesthetic. Turner's analysis might also suggest why rock music, the very embodiment of adolescent male rebellion, has for several decades now been the most popular art form throughout the world.

Turner points out that many of the forces that brought about our current crisis have already begun to dissipate. The populations of most of the industrialized countries have leveled out and aged. Feminism has initiated a critique of masculine culture that has already begun to refeminize the arts. The science of ecology has shown the dangers of fossil-burning and nuclear fission. Combustion as a model for artistic creation is already discredited.

What continues to propel art down the path of destruction (and deconstruction) is an outmoded view of science maintained by postmodern theorists and avant-garde artists to justify their own practices. The whole endeavor of Derridean deconstruction, for instance, is to reduce works of literature to a soup of "traces" and "*différances*" similar to the primal chaos that immediately succeeded the Big Bang.

But the old positivistic model of the universe, for which notions about chaos and indeterminacy seemed to provide some relief, has now been superseded by a new model shaped by the sciences of chaos theory, evolution, sociobiology, neurobiology, and the study of feedback systems. Turner proposes a new worldview which recognizes the fact that higher-level, more complex forms of order emerge naturally from lower-level, simpler ones—a process which has been accelerating from the instant of the Big Bang to the present at an ever-increasing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rate. In this view, the arts represent the highest, most complex and reflexive level of a continually evolving hierarchy. Evolution thus becomes, for Turner, "the central paradigm of all knowledge," one which, because of its ability to create unpredictable novelty, "radically and totally *refutes* determinism." Evolution—not combustion, not deterministic Newtonian physics, not quantum mechanics—provides the truest and most efficacious model of human freedom and creativity.

In "Kalogenetics" and "The Neural Lyre," two essays in *Natural Classicism*, and in the more recent *Beauty*, Turner has presented a compelling case for the notion that beauty—that outcast of postmodern aesthetics—is in fact the goal toward which even the most apparently chaotic systems are drawn. Scientists who study nature's mysteries, Turner points out, use the term *elegance* as a key criterion in determining the value of a scientific theory.

Turner's arguments are too complex to do them complete justice in a short essay, but his speculations concerning beauty, the structure and reward system of the human brain, the nature of artistic forms and genres, and the way all three interact in the creation and reception of works of art are so fascinating that they must be briefly described. Though Turner applies his insights to a wide range of human experience, I will limit my discussion to literature.

The experience of beauty, Turner suggests, is the reward for, among other things, "the exercise of the peculiar spiritual skills demanded by the human ritual"; "the encounter with, acceptance, and passing-through of the shame of mortal self-awareness"; "a sensitivity to the general tendency or theme of the universe"; and "the exercise of the human capacity to continue and deepen that process into new realms of being." "Beauty," Turner declares, "is always paradoxical. It is not mere chaos and nonlinearity but the paradoxical coexistence of chaos and order, nonlinear discontinuity with linear flow and predictable repetition." Turner cites as examples of this definition of beauty such diverse phenomena as the Mandelbrot set, "Jacquard paisleys, the feathers of peacocks, the body-paint of tattoo designs of Maoris or Melanesians, the complexity of a great wine, the curlicues of Hiroshige seafoam or Haida ornamentation or seahorses or Mozart melodies." Echoing Keats' famous formulation, Turner states, "If truth is conformity to fact, and fact is the product of a feedback process that we intuitively perceive as beauty, then beauty is the way we perceive and intuit truth."

Truth and beauty: formidable, unfashionable words. To ground these abstractions, let us turn for a moment to what is perhaps the oldest human art form—storytelling—and its most ancient literary embodiment, epic poetry, a form Turner lists among what he calls the natural classical genres. Grounded in oral traditions and appearing in a variety of human cultures, epic is a grand narrative, peopled by gods and heroes, which fixes in memorable form the stories and myths a people tell themselves to explain the world. In the branchings of its plot, the epic maps out time; in the relationship of its subplots and details to its larger narrative movements, it allows that mixture of linear and nonlinear, orderly and chaotic, elements necessary for the creation and perception of beauty. In addition, epic poems are recited aloud, not read in solitude, and are therefore performative acts. Epic poetry is generally composed in some type of meter, in part to make it more memorable. Turner cites studies of Homeric and Yugoslavian epic that demonstrate that "the formulaic structure of oral epic poetry is precisely designed to fit the limitations and capacities of human memory storage."

As in Homer, an epic often includes primitive forms of theology, history, and philosophy, but all are subordinated to story; to plot. Modern theories of fiction tend to denigrate plot, but recent studies in psychology suggest that narrative is more than simply a pleasant way to pass the time, an entertainment in the most superficial sense: it is a universal human phenomenon essential to the creation of human identity, as important to an individual as to a culture. Storytelling is an essential element of our training in ethics, psychology, and interpersonal relations. That is why the epic poetry of Homer, for instance, was considered the foundation of Greek society, the cornerstone of every citizen's moral and intellectual training, and why epic poetry is nearly universal throughout the world. If we do not exercise this inbuilt narrative capacity, we cannot act as moral agents; but like the Pierrots and clowns of absurdist literature, we are condemned to live in a world without order, coherence, or meaning. Postmodern art, by abandoning narrative, has left it to the popular arts to give us pictures of ourselves and our world. One might even go further and regard the modernist attempt to abandon narrative as an assault on our ability to form a coherent self; and in fact much poststructuralist theory deconstructs humanistic conceptions of personal identity. The chief result of the abandonment of narrative—as with the systematic destruction of all the natural classical genres—has been to leave us in doubt as to who and what we are; to make us doubt the existence of human nature, morality, or objective truth.

Of course, one possibility is that such theorists are right and there is no such thing as human nature, morality, or objective truth—though the way most of us conduct our lives would seem evidence to the contrary. Indeed, part of our cultural schizophrenia is manifested in the way we separate art from the practical conduct of our lives. Modern social sciences have also unwittingly contributed to our era's moral and social relativism. Turner points out that one unfortunate result of the study of other cultures has been to foster the notion that all values are relative; that all definitions of truth, art, and beauty are relative and culture-bound.

And here is precisely where Turner's thought becomes most daring. After surveying an impressive range of scientific disciplines, Turner proposes the idea that there really is such a thing as human nature, and he identifies a number of human activities which appear in cultures throughout the world. In Chapter Four of *Beauty*, he lists 17 "neurocharms"—a word identifying these panhuman capabilities—and shows how obsolescent scientific ideas have impeded our recognition of their universal nature and resulted in much confused thinking. In Chapter Five, he states:

> Modernist theoreticians attempted to separate language and its attendant classification systems from its shameful neurobiological basis, so that the moral and aesthetic judgmental categories they contained would be culturally relative and so defused of normative force. They thus seized on what came to known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which was an interesting theory, of limited validity, to the effect that differences between languages reflected fundamental variations in cultural worldview. Further anthropological-linguistic research (for instance, by the anthropologist Donald Brown) has shown that anything that can be said or thought in one language can be said or thought in another, though some paraphrase

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

may be necessary. We all basically have the same worldview, as far as linguistic differences are concerned.

But the news of this correction has not yet seeped through to most contemporary pundits of aesthetic theory, and the old clichés of the thirty-four Eskimo words for snow [there is no such thing] and the lack of a past and future tense in some Plains Indian languages are still trotted out as evidence of the incommensurability of different cultural "worlds" (and thus of the arbitrariness of value judgments). We can forgive someone like Wittgenstein for the idea of different language games, given the state of anthropological and neuropsychological research in his times; it is harder, however, to forgive contemporary cultural relativists who should know better by now.

To demonstrate the fallacy of these relativistic views, Turner cites a number of new studies which reveal, for instance, that words for the same primary colors exist in languages throughout the world and that people in all the world's cultures draw metaphors from one sense to describe another in a unidirectional way.

Another cultural universal, cited by Turner in an essay entitled "The Neural Lyre," is poetic meter. A poet of considerable skill, Turner brings to his study of meter (conducted with psychophysicist Ernst Pöppel) both practical and theoretical knowledge. Analyzing poetry from a number of languages—ranging from the more familiar English and Greek to Ndembu, Eipo, and Finnish—Turner describes the way the brain understands time, how meter is tied to the brain's own neurochemical reward system, how poetic line length is determined by the brain's method of information-processing, and how meter engages and integrates many different functions of the brain. He also demonstrates meter's cultural universality.

Briefly, Turner argues in the "Neural Lyre" that the human brain has a number of built-in tendencies: an incomplete list includes the fact that it is hierarchical, reflexive, synthetic, active, rhythmic, hemispherically specialized, and self-rewarding. Turner cites Jerre Levy's research showing that "the left brain maps spatial information onto a temporal order, while the right brain maps temporal information onto a spatial order" to suggest how metrical poetry unites the linguistic capabilities of the left brain with the spacio-temporal abilities of the right and joins them both with other processes in the forebrain and limbic system to create the overall body-brain response we experience when reading or hearing poetry: the chill up the spine, the quickened breath, the heightened state of awareness, the rising of hair on the back of the neck.

In one of his most daring attempts at synthesis, Turner ties the "self-rewarding" capacities of the brain to another of its tendencies, for which he has coined the term "kalogenetic," a word combining the Greek words for "beauty" and "genesis" and describing, in Turner's words, the brain's "strong drive to construct affirmative, plausible, coherent, consistent, parsimonious, and predictively powerful models of the world." Citing studies of brain chemistry, Turner argues that the brain rewards itself for the experience of beauty by feeling a drug-like "high" produced by endorphins and other opiate-like substances and suggests that metrical poetry triggers this experience by allying itself with various information-processing capacities of the human brain.

Another tendency of the human brain, Turner argues, is that it is determinative. "That is," Turner writes, "it insists on certainty and unambiguity, and so is at war with the probabilistic and indeterminate nature of the most primitive and archaic components of the universe." The brain also finds itself at war with poststructuralist theories that regard literary texts as vague and misty seas of quantumlike "traces" and "*différances*." In his discussion of trope in *Beauty*, Turner counters such postmodern theories by reminding us that critical theory is largely a left-brain phenomenon which cannot deal effectively with metaphor, poetic meter, and other "neurocharms" that engage the whole brain. In "Performed Being," he suggests a way around postmodern difficulties with linguistic reference and literary interpretation by reminding us that drama, for instance, originated in religious ritual performance. He suggests that a performative method of literary interpretation might be analogous to the act of measurement in quantum physics, where measurement forces an electron to declare a specific velocity or location. In dramatic performance, Turner argues, a text must similarly "choose an objective and must sacrifice the divine indeterminacy and infinitude of possibility for the tragic and concrete finitude of actuality." The goal of an ideal critic, he suggests, might be "to give so lucid, so definite a reading that the work is actualized and made concrete before us, and reincarnated into the deepest idiom and costume and dialect of our own time." Plot, since it is the driving force of both epic and tragedy, is therefore central to any performative approach to literature. Readers need it in order to play out a literary work's actions and ideas on their own passions and sympathies.

Of course many people are put off by such scientific forays into the arts—particularly when they challenge long-held or politically self-serving beliefs. To test the validity of Turner's analysis, consider so-called performance art of recent decades, a distinctively modern form which eschews traditional artistic disciplines and generally replaces plot with some type of improvisation. At its center, there is usually a solitary performer engaged in some form of exhibitionistic, dangerous, or self-destructive activity. We have all seen or read about performances in which artists have deliberately abased or mutilated their own bodies—acts that might easily be read as attempts to reclaim the human body and restore some of the public and ritualistic functions to art. In the absence of art's natural classical forms, such performances might appear inevitable and necessary—perhaps even heroic.

Yet the narcissism and destructive violence of many of these pieces show the limits of the modern aesthetic. Like poetry reduced to inarticulate sound bites, performance art of this sort is subject to a law of diminishing returns. That artists feel it necessary to slash or shoot themselves in order to assert the body's presence testifies to their imaginative failure. The logical end of such performances, if pursued with the usual spirit of avant-garde one-upmanship, is personal and cultural suicide.

At present, the arts seem poised either to dissolve in the *reductio ad absurdum* of avant-garde experiment or to reincarnate themselves in their natural classical forms. To cede plot, tonality, poetic meter, and artistic representation to the entertainment industries and disappear from serious art, or to reinvest those ancient neurocharms with the magic to enchant future generations. We can either reinvent the ancient forms of myth and epic, verse drama and poetic narrative, or continue to dissipate their energies in the entropic spiral of avant-garde experiment. C

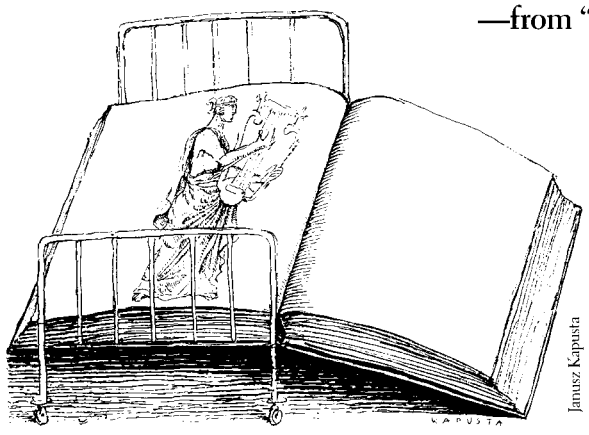
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For Love of the Muse

by Stacey Kors

"All that matters now is poetry
In which the feeling is the thought."

—from "Paysages Legendaires"



Janusz Kapusta

When writing about the poet Peter Russell, it is hard to know where to begin. First, there is the matter of his prolificness, and the sheer vastness of his *oeuvre*: Russell, who describes poetry as being "dangerously near the natural functions for me," has published well over 30 volumes of verse and has written enough poems to fill scores of others. Then there is the extraordinary diversity of this poetry: from works that range in length from a handful of lines to hundreds of pages (his unpublished epic—ironically titled *Ephemeron*—is over 2,000 manuscript pages long), and vary in style from free verse to formalist, from the scabrous epigrams found in his book *Malice Aforethought* to the lush, sweeping lyrics that suffuse *The Golden Chain* and *Theories*. As Russell remarks in his poem "My Voices":

> How many voices tell in me,
> I cannot say how many call
> Night and day insistently,
> Or distinguish them at all.

Uncommon such diversity may be; haphazard it is not—for Russell's is a case where the work faithfully mirrors the man, who is at once romantic and contemptuous, serious and silly, simple and extraordinarily complex. The quality of this work, like Russell's character, may not always be consistent; but the end result, in either case, remains consistently engaging.

A British poet of Irish descent, Peter Russell was born in Bristol, England, in 1921, and by age three—"before I knew my alphabet"—had already decided that he wanted to be a poet "or nothing." After serving in the Royal Artillery during World War II, Russell began publishing poetry, critical articles, and interviews in a number of American and English reviews, and in 1949 founded *Nine*, a small, London-based poetry magazine that attracted the attention of both T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Although the editor of a literary review for seven years, Russell never felt at home in the "professional establishment world" of academics and *literati*; nor did his steadfast belief in "*ideas*, not ideologies; *original thought*, not conformity," do much to ingratiate him at a time when the Movement poets (like Philip Larkin and Kingsley Amis) were beginning to take hold in England. Russell's feelings of estrangement from the London poetry scene in the 1950's were furthered by a move from the city to the countryside, the acquisition and management of an antiquarian bookstore and small poetry press, and the general demands accompanying family life. During this period of what he calls "practical concerns," Russell worked long hours in an effort to make ends meet; in that time, he wrote virtually no poetry.

Russell ended up being no better a businessman than a conformist: by 1963 the bookstore had failed—along, unfortunately, with his marriage. Bereft of both emotional and financial ties to England, and with no love lost between him and the then-reigning *cognoscenti*, Russell moved to Berlin and devoted himself entirely to his poetry. After an intense year of writing, Russell felt that he "had at last become a real poet." Continuing a time-honored tradition, he soon took up residence in Italy, the adopted home of Shelley, Keats, Byron, and numerous other English poets before him:

> Elizabeth Barret, Arthur Hugh Clough, W.S. Landor
> Lie in the English cemetery, ghosts of our own
> In the warm turf tufted with cypresses: And
> The trams clatter by—they are closing the shops
> For the afternoon. Is this a silence or an unheard
> Rumble of innumerable unseen encounters
> In the world below? Not a sound disturbs
> The utterly still air silent up here.
>
> —from "Florence"

Insatiably curious about the world around him, Peter Russell is always learning something new, whether studying up on Sanskrit or feasting upon the music of Mozart and Monteverdi. Russell's passion for knowledge and keen intellect permeate his poetry, which is peppered with references to science, art, history, linguistics, and literature—including rather obscure allusions to classical Greek, ancient Oriental, and medieval Islamic

---

Stacey Kors is a freelance writer in New York. She is a contributing editor to Opera Monthly *and writes regularly for* The Opera Quarterly *and* Stagebill.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

texts. "I like poetry that brings out in me as reader the maximum awareness of as much as the mind can comprehend," explains Russell, who firmly believes that "a hidden vein of intellectuality (genuine) needs to be present even in a comparatively simple lyric."

Given his intense interest in music, and natural affinity for the musical, it is not surprising that lyric poetry is Russell's strength. Russell once wrote that "The finished result of a good poem should be, phrase by phrase, *at least as compelling as music*"; and indeed, at its best his poetry is filled with verses that are richly melodic, verses that create, and are accompanied, by their own music. Such lyricism is manifest in Russell's work regardless of the mood conveyed, be it gravely portentous:

> One more tomorrow all our deaths will be
> Annihilated where that fatal tree
> Spreads in the sun. Blossoms will fall
> For the last time on the desolate city.
>
> Where the Spring rejoicings are left by all
> As superfluous where the mushroom ball
> Breaks the air—uncanny silence be
> Where once blackbird and songthrush were.
>
> —from "The Fear of War"

or playful and romantic:

> How can one bear to be alive?
> Five hundred thousand things to do!
> solitary dreamer in a honey-hive.
> I dream of you . . .
>
> The problem *is*, of course,—to *be*,
> In a dead world of waxen cells,
> Not that there's monotony
> Even in insect hells.
>
> —from "Theorem"

Even his scathing epigrams have a sonorous quality about them. Take, for example, "Creeping Professors," one of Russell's many jabs at academia:

> Man and the creeping beasts may seem diverse—
> The reptiles are not really very *bright*;
> Professors *seem* intelligent, all right—
> Until they talk of poetry,—or verse.
> The creeping *beasts* are higher in the scale
> Of shining Justice when our faults are weighed:
> Our *Faculties* a pallid cavalcade,—
> But creeping bipeds are beyond the *pale*.

Or "Avant Garde," his caustic commentary on popular artistic trends:

> The avant garde keeps moving crab-like forward
> Hard on the tail of commerce, films and ads;
> It's creeping slowly 1934-ward
> On Disney's lizard-tail, and other 'thirties fads . . .

Like a true linguist, Russell's preternatural sensitivity to the musicality of language is far from restricted to his native tongue, as is exhibited through his poetic translations. A competent speaker of a dozen different languages, Russell has translated works in everything from modern Russian (Russell was an early translator of Osip Mandelstam and Alexander Blok) to ancient Persian and Greek, from German, Spanish, French, and Italian to African and Slavonic dialects. As noted by the English poet and critic Kathleen Raine, Russell—much in the style of his mentor Ezra Pound—considers words "a living medium," and he possesses a remarkable gift for overcoming the language limitations inherent in translation to capture skillfully the essence of a particular culture or period, however remote from our view.

One sees this most clearly in Russell's translations of the 4th-century Latin poet, Cittinus Aurelianus Quintilius, who, in recognition of the madness that beset him near the end of his life, was dubbed "Stultus" ("a fool") by late antiquity. The bulk of poems now available to us were discovered accidentally by a Nicaraguan engineer who, while digging for potash near the site of the ancient Aphrodisiapolis, stumbled upon a massive papyrus containing dozens of the ancient poet's elegies, as well as fragments of other works.

As sole translator of the poetry of Quintilius, Russell, who feels a certain kinship with this outspoken and somewhat ostracized Roman elegist, has put much labor and love into this endeavor; it is, in fact, his most comprehensive translation project to date, complete with detailed exegetical notes that offer the reader further insight into the sociocultural setting out of which Quintilius and his work emerged. Witnessing the operatic spectacle of an empire in decline, Quintilius became a sort of self-proclaimed prophet-commentator of the times, his poetry a medium for both apocalyptic vision and political satire:

> The Lyceum's become truly a Wolf Fold, a shut shop to scrying.
> The Academy closed by idolatrous bigots, I see it coming . . .
> Burn down the libraries, make off with the gold!
>
> Ah well, I may be wrong, and Rome, as Claudian says,
> Will last for ever, but seeing these fruits in our Universities
> Serving the barbarians' ends, personally I consider
> *Us doomed* . . .
>
> . . . Rome's a *bordello*.
> An Emperor's sister who's having it off with her steward
> Is conspiring to topple Augustus her brother,
> And found out, has sent for aid to the Huns.
> Take it or leave it. The Angel has spoken.

Like Russell, Quintilius has many sides which suffuse his poetry. At one moment he can be offensive and off-color, quick in his condemnations of half-baked egalitarians, bureaucrats, upstart theologians, and weak-minded militarists; at another, his sentiments take on the tone of a Keatsian nature ode:

> Me indeed, above all, may the sweet Muses welcome with gifts,
> (Whose sacred emblems driven by absorbing love I bear);
> To me, their servant, may they show the ways of Heaven and the stars,
> Sun's daily setting, and the Moon's diverse phases;

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The cause of earthquakes; and the force that makes
Ocean heave
Breaking its barriers now, now sinking in its allotted
basin;
Why it is that Winter's suns hasten so to dip themselves
Beneath the sea; and what delay detains the tardy nights.
Thy countryside and all Thy running streams
Be my delight, sweet Goddesses; and let me love
Thy waters and secluded woods.

What is most intriguing about this obscure character from ancient history is that, although born in A.D. 390, he was not conceived until the late 1940's—in Russell's fecund imagination. Like John Shade in Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, Quintilius is a fictional poet, originally inspired by poet and philosopher George Santayana (also the inspiration for Wallace Stevens' "Old Philosopher in Rome"). With Russell's attention to scholarly detail—including a fabricated biographer—Quintilius is a brilliantly developed and executed artistic ruse; and for someone whose preferred models for poetry are Dante, Petrarch, and the ancient Greeks, he is the perfect poetic exercise as well.

Although Quintilius is an invention of Russell's fancy, one cannot really say that Russell writes these poems: they are, rather, an unusual sort of creative translation, where Quintilius is the brash, uninhibited, pleasure-seeking poet of Russell's id, as "translated" by Russell's ego. Words flow "from the pen of Quintilius," not from Russell himself—in fact, in the preface to *The Elegies of Quintilius*, we are told that "the translator has found it necessary to exscind several lines which are too raw even for these relaxed days." It is difficult to imagine what these lines might contain, considering the extreme explicitness of some of the ones he has chosen to "leave in." A bit of coarse language, however, should not affect one's judgment of the quality of these poems, which are imaginative, intelligent, and created with good humor. At times, their creed is reminiscent of Pound's *Canto XIV*, in which the true "perverters of language" are defined as those "who have set money-lust / Before the pleasures of the senses." A crime, indeed, that neither Quintilius nor Russell could ever seriously be accused of.

In recent years, Peter Russell has faced more than his share of hardships. In March 1990, a fire damaged Russell's Tuscan farmhouse, razing the poet's vast personal archive of rare books, diaries, essays, and manuscripts, as well as holographs by Montale, Quasimodo, Ungaretti, Pound, and Eliot. Uninsured and impoverished, Russell moved to a converted turbine shed—lovingly referred to as "La Turbina"—with his teenage son, Peter George. In the fall of 1992, while Russell was attending a poetry seminar in Salzburg, torrential rains and mudslides flooded his new home, destroying the remains of his library, his manuscripts, and the copies of numerous early volumes of his work that he had reprinted earlier that year. In a recent interview with William Oxley, Russell took a surprisingly philosophical approach to his recurrent losses: "The Muses have done me the favour of abstracting, or burning, or flooding much of what I've written. They have permitted me to finish off a certain proportion of what I've done, and I'm thankful for that."

For a few months, Russell and his mud-clogged typewriter found shelter in a small spare room in the home of the village priest, while Peter George was cared for by a local family. But the absence of his son, combined with a general sense of displacement, soon made such accommodations unbearable, and Russell returned with Peter George to La Turbina early in 1993, even though its rooms were still buried under several inches of mud.

It is from here that Russell writes his poems, as well as prepares and produces *Marginalia*, "an occasional review combining lyric and satiric poetry with acerbic observations on the anti-poetic scene." Conceived in 1990, *Marginalia*'s circulation has grown from a few dozen to 2,000 copies, which Russell sends out to friends and admirers *gratis* (donations appreciated) even though he rarely has enough money to cover the cost of production and postage.

As paradoxical as Russell's editorial generosity may seem given his shaky economic footing, it is actually more shrewd than irresponsible: *Marginalia*—which regularly includes a list of the poet's books available for purchase—is Russell's way of keeping in touch with the poetry scene, keeping his ideas and poems circulating, if only in a small way. For although Russell may be a respected, prize-winning poet in Italy, he and his work have, over the years, been unjustly neglected by the English-speaking world.

There is, however, an even stronger force motivating Russell: simply put, writing, especially writing poetry, is something that Russell not only loves, but *needs* to do. Says Russell, "Poetry is to do with breathing. Breathing is life, *anima*, *pneuma*." He elaborates on this vital relationship in "Breaking Up?":

It is the final end of living,
It is the only thing that counts;
It is the finest form of giving—
Give it your final ounce.

When broached by Russell's alter ego, this passionate commitment to the art seems more of a burden than a blessing:

For me, I must ply the vowed toils of the dedicated poet,
Scholar and devotee of every Art and Science,
And at all time attendant to the visiting Muse,
—Knocked senseless and left hungry as I may be
By hostile Fates and the murderous hands of men.

It is hard to say which better typifies Russell's point of view; doubtless, considering all he has endured over the years, both play a role. One can only hope that both man and the fates will eventually reverse their position and bestow upon Russell the recognition he deserves, while he is still able to enjoy it.

Peter Russell's latest poems, trenchant essays, random musings, and polemical outbursts can be found in his periodic journal, ***Marginalia***. The journal even offers excellent deals on rare and out-of-print books from Russell's personal library—including first-edition volumes by writers such as Ezra Pound, whom Russell knew personally, and numerous titles unavailable from any other source.

Marginalia comes out irregularly, with even numbers written in Italian and odd numbers in English. You can receive ***Marginalia*** for free, from the address below, but donations are appreciated.

Peter Russell
"La Turbina"
52026 Pian di Sco
Prov. Arezzo, Italy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Progress

by Richard Moore

Slowly our lives are becoming intolerable, and before long
missiles may go and explode
most of us. Some of us blame
Communists, radicals; some curse unions, and others
pollution.
Corporate insanity, say
some, and the profits in arms . . .
Maybe; but isn't there some one obvious, odious villain
that we can boo at and hiss?
Friends, I've a candidate right
here for the office, for three mad centuries worshipped,
a hero.
Progress, it's you that I mean.
People who praise you forget
men went on in stability millions of years, till your advent
collared them, herded them, pell-
mell down rapids of time
into your cities of death—Nagasaki, Hiroshima, Dresden,
Tokyo . . . Bright are your works—
Dresden most brilliant of all:
over a hundred and thirty-five thousand inhabitants
burned up,
poof, in a pillar of flame.
Even your nuclear blasts
can't kill men any quicker than that. Now "numerous other
known ecological im
balances" threaten the same:
birds disappearing because our insecticides flavor their
dinners,
beetles destructive because
once they were eaten by birds.
Monks daren't fast any more; for the DDT in their bodies,
stored in their fat, when the fat
dwindled, would poison their blood.
Oilwells gush at the coastline, making it sticky for swimmers;
plankton and ducks are upset.
Poor blacks yell in the streets.
No one is satisfied; old men sit on their porches and wonder
who can have flushed it away,
life as it was in their youth?
Even in buying an old dishwasher for thirty-five dollars,
all of our pleasure is spoiled:
new ones cost five times as much;
look, though, the model is different: they've added an
add-a-dish feature.
Men will develop a false
view of the world when their hot
water comes out of a faucet. A mammoth producer of
wood pulp
promises customers: all
babies about to be born
soon will inhabit a cheap and completely disposable cosmos:
cardboard mattresses, beds,
potties that fold into bags,
everything baby can touch, taste, destined to stink in a sewer.
Isn't it time that we asked
how all this nonsense began?

First you, Progress, stuck us in villages, who had been hunters;
though we had starved sometimes,
still we had kept on the move,
finding the thrills we can get now only by killing each other.
Well-fed men were so bored,
vast populations arose;
civilizations were born, with their marvelous organization
practicing death on a grand
scale: war, noblest of arts.
Murderous Zenlike Achilles could sever more heads in an
instant
than a computer can sum.
What can you say for him? This:
it was like primitive hunting, the same inspirations. He
leapt right
into the battle, its storm
center, its dervish of death,
ready to perish himself as he siphoned the heat of the nations.
Yet that he spared men too
puts the computer to shame.
All this led to another development: specialization.
Week long, people can dump
garbage cans into a truck,
and they will still be regarded as competent citizens, making
livings, engendering votes,
babies, begetting the laws.
Well, if the mind grows only through contact with things that
it touches,
garbage collectors enjoy
more stimulation than most.
Most of us think that reality floats abstract in the ether,
food for the experts, too
rare for a mortal to chew.
What we perceive with our unwashed eyes is irrelevant detail.
Note what sprouts in the park.
Miracles. Radio waves.
Everywhere cheap pop tunes, manifested on silver receivers,
weave unsuspected in space,
silently lurk in the light,
like a potassium cyanide crystal before it is swallowed.
O I exaggerate! What

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

harm can a radio do?
What harm comes to the souls of our TV-mesmerized
children?
Shall they not shine as the Tube's
bilious glow in the night?

Yet we are healthy, you tell us, and plump with our plentiful
dinners.
Junior executives spend
triple the national wage,
sending their dear ones, poisoned by fake foods, pale,
to the doctors.
Hospitals blossom with ills
strange to a primitive tribe.
Cancer, the greatest bonanza in medical history! Surgeons
clip out the tumor, aware
tumors will sprout in its place.
X rays, causes of cancer, are used on the cancerous patients—
safely—protected by law.
Paupers are spared and can die
anguished, excluded from medicine's TV-advertised marvels.
Doesn't that idiot box
give any pleasure at all?

Millionaires, watching the crooks on it fight for a few hundred
thousand,
seeing a man lay down
life for their gains in a week,
surely experience great satisfaction. Perhaps the producers,
millionaires also, produce
programs to warm their own hearts.
That would be natural. They were rewarded for civilized
virtue.
Avarice shoots on the screen,
bringing the message to all.
That's why our management-market economy's going to
pieces.
Patsies were always required,
lubricants for the machine,
nice guys, Negroes, and Osteopaths, who were given too little,
cheated, content with their skills.
Who needs them or their skills?
Loud boys, aimlessly stoning the dead bat kite on the
playground,
show what our games have become.
Skill is irrelevant now.

Now as my country continues its long, slow lapse into empire,
citizens learn to forget
even their citizenship.
Selfhood triumphs, and man is released from his dirty
surroundings,
freed from the dance of his tribe,
stumbles at last on himself.
That is the ultimate specialization: a man on his island,
"doing his thing," unaware
others are shriveling too.
Back in the Nineteenth Century selfhood swept to its heyday;
man moved into his own,
waltzed with himself and his love.
Ties of the minuet loosened, the fetters of custom and reason.
Beautiful sentiments swelled
up in his billowing heart,
which, like a stock-market bubble, exploded. Hysterical
pieces,
swept from the analyst's couch,
cry in his crumbling verse.
Primitive fantasies, lusts, and his Freudian Id have
obsessed him;
savages dance in his dreams
never discovered on earth.
Wherefore the misery? Why thus maddened and
melodramatic?
If there's no "me" anymore,
therefore is gaiety dead?
It was a silly identity, only our vanities needed.
They can survive on their own,
deep indestructible rock,
skeletal, fixed in our warm earth, propping our softer behavior.
Millions may shrivel to dust,
vanities never can die.

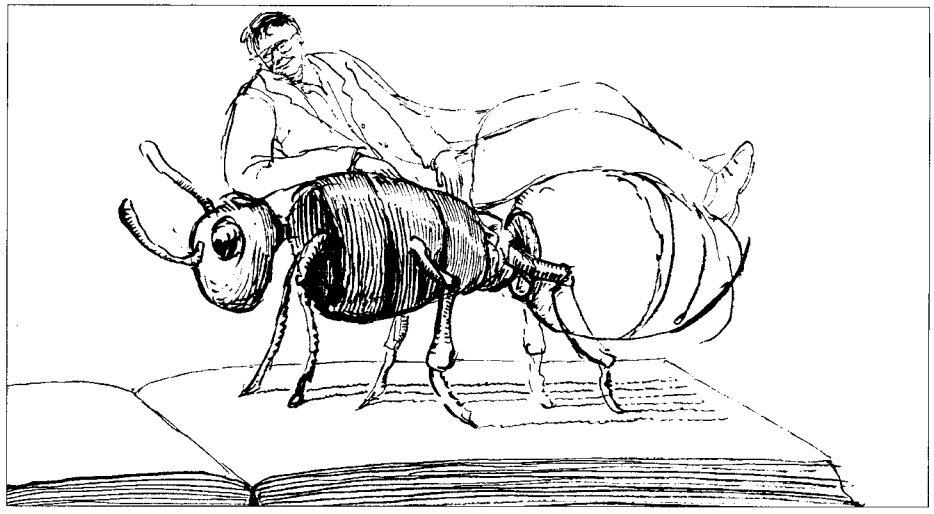
When the deterioration of consciousness reaches its climax,
Progress, where will you go—
what can occur after that?
What's more important to people, themselves or a world they
can relish?
Those unaware of themselves
most are aware of the world.
Mountains were mountains at first, say the Buddhists, and
primitive hunters
stalked in them. Then men dreamed
mountains no longer were real,
only their thoughts and their confident selfhood. Then, say
the Buddhists,
self-dreams wither and fail:
mountains are mountains again.
Mao Tse-tung thought primitives communists; from them
have issued
feudalists, keepers of slaves;
capitalism from these.
Then revolution, the last age: man comes back to the
commune.
Am I not mad to repeat
nonsense of Buddhists and Mao?
Why do I fondle such nasty and naughty opinions? My
mother
thinks it's because I was dropped
out of her belly too soon,
causing, along with some pills she had taken, irreparable
damage.
I was unwanted just then:
father was planning a trip.
Trips, as he loved to explain, were the symbol and acme
of progress.
Nowadays birth pills halt
babies that get in its way.
Progress, never again need your enemies grow into manhood.
Sirrah, my fight with you now
started before I was born.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Happy Man in a Terrible Century

by Max Oelschlaeger

"Happiness is at once the best, the noblest, and the pleasantest of things."
—Aristotle



Janusz Kapusta

Naturalist
by Edward O. Wilson
Washington, D.C: Island Press/Shearwater Books;
380 pp., $24.95

The claim to objectivity on the part of reviewers is, if not ill informed, precious. I make no claim to offer the one true reading of Edward O. Wilson's autobiography. However, by my scheme of reckoning, he is one of the cultural giants of the last half of the 20th century. I hope that his autobiography will introduce him to a much larger segment of American society. If the *Book of Virtues* outlines in theory the best of human aspiration, *Naturalist* recounts the story—without self-aggrandizement—of such a life.

We live within a mass society, where individuals are relentlessly seduced by the market and precious few stand out from the crowd. The reductive vision of man as *Homo economicus* grows frighteningly more real. And culturally dominant. Our heroes are more and more the wrong people. Some are famous simply because they are wealthy, as if there were some correlation between economic status and human worth. Others become cultural icons because they host talk shows, excel athletically, or appear in movies or on television. *Naturalist* offers an intimate picture of a man who is a genuine alternative. I emphasize that Wilson does not represent himself as a cultural hero. His autobiography is modest, even self-effacing, offering a strong counterpoint to the puffery that inflates today's public personae. Too often, when we learn the truth about the "high and the mighty," we discover that they are concocted of nothing more than mass media smoke and mirrors. Wilson is the real thing. On balance, the book offers us the chronicle of a conservative in the best sense of the word: a man who believes in the virtue of hard work and the possibility of discovering truth, and who, through the combination of personality and determination, exemplifies the best of human potentiality.

Naturalist is comprised of two parts, the first dealing with Wilson's life as a child through the early years in graduate school at Harvard, and the second with the years after 1954. Several things in part one strike this reader; primarily, however, it creates the overwhelming impression that the man (an internationally acclaimed biologist, creator of not one but several brilliant scientific theories, and winner of two Pulitzer Prizes) was fundamentally shaped by nature—the natural world in all its mystery, complexity, and beauty—more than by anything else.

Wilson's success is not based on inherited wealth or on an ideal family life, yet he says unequivocally, "My childhood was blessed." The child of a broken family (now a common circumstance, but one that was still unusual in the first half of this century) constantly on the move, seeking not economic opportunity so much as the means of survival, Wilson suggests that his unsettled life "made Nature my companion of choice, because the outdoors was one part of my world I perceived to hold rock steady. Animals and plants I could count on; human relationships were more difficult." He avows that it was the

Max Oelschlaeger is a professor of philosophy and religious studies at the University of North Texas and author of Caring for Creation: An Ecumenical Approach to the Environmental Crisis *(Yale University Press, 1994).*

BooksNow
To order these books, (24hrs, 365 days)
please call (800) 962-6651 (Ext. 5200)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

opportunity to wander in relatively unhumanized environs, rather than the ordinary processes of socialization, that forged his temperament.

As the consumerist society, increasingly concentrated in megalopolises that destroy wilderness and mask the heavens, grows, such a childhood becomes more and more out of reach. Even during the 1930's, a child's life spent in close contact with nature was not the norm. Most children were caught up in the process that turned them into butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers—human beings aspiring to nothing more than lives of quiet desperation. Wilson slipped the noose, his psyche suffused with what he terms "biophilia," the love of life. The human mind, he argues, is shaped "by relatively few decisive configurations. . . . The process is strongest in children, and to some extent it programs the trajectory of their lives." For him, the decisive factor was wild nature. In a culture that, as Wilson opines, perches on the precipice of ecocatastrophe, one can only wonder what will happen if we do not, somehow, reintroduce *all our children*, rich and poor, to the natural world.

Church, school, and the Boy Scouts were also formative influences. Though Wilson is a professed materialist, I find in his work avowals that are remarkably spiritual. For one thing, he does not believe that science and religion are antagonistic. For another, his love of life, then and now, articulates itself in terms of biblical language, as in Part Two, where he expresses his reflections on the evolutionary hypothesis in terms of the fourth day of the Creation: "Let the waters teem with countless living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of Heaven." What is singularly important about this statement is the value judgment: life is good, of inherent worth, not just in terms of human schemes. "Love the organisms for themselves first."

School, too, played a role in the young man's life, primarily the Gulf Coast Military Academy (GCMA) and the University of Alabama (which, he remarks, "saved me"). I find a fine, if dry, humor in Wilson's writing, as in the remark that "GCMA was a carefully planned nightmare engineered for the betterment of the untutored and undisciplined." The lessons of GCMA took, teaching Wilson a respect for (legitimate) authority, traditional institutions, and civility. It is good for us to be reminded of the virtues of the military regimen, which taught Wilson, among other things, a regard "for altruism and devotion to duty." Although I am an honorably discharged veteran of the Vietnam era, my own memories of the military were challenged by Wilson's, helping to restore an intellectual balance—itself a virtue of first rank.

Finally, the Boy Scouts, a venerable institution (also one that has come under a sometimes withering fire during recent political correctness wars) that Wilson discusses in a chapter aptly titled "To Do My Duty," played its part. Those who were Scouts will know how to finish the pledge, and can perhaps intuit the influence the Scouts had on Wilson. He observes that to this day he can recite the Scout Oath, with no more of a jog to memory than raising his right hand in the appropriate fashion. There is a marvelous photograph (among many others) of Wilson as an Eagle Scout (c. 1944), chest bedecked with merit badges, including all that were awarded in the area of natural history. Again, Wilson helps remind us of both the importance and fallibility of our institution. Judged by today's standards, the Scouts of his time were imperfect; yet they now admit all young men, regardless of race. And perhaps more progress awaits another generation.

I shall pass quickly over the second part of *Naturalist*, noting only a few dominant themes. One is that of humility. I am struck by the difference between the greatness of Wilson's achievements and his self-assessment. He has contributed cutting-edge hypotheses and research on a wide variety of scientific fronts, including island biogeography, sociobiology, and conservation biology. Yet he suggests, on more than one occasion, that he succeeded only because better thinkers, particularly those who were mathematically gifted and analytically inclined, raised a variety of ill-defined, complex problems for him to ponder. While approving of humility, I believe that those who generate hypotheses that integrate masses of confusing, seemingly unsystematic data into heuristically fruitful and explanatorily functional gestalts are at least the intellectual equals of those given to Cartesian modes of thinking. Further, some deep thinkers argue that while mathematical analysis offers unparalleled rigor, it is not an end in itself. Too much of it may, in fact, be pernicious to imaginative and original thought, the kind of cognition essential to meeting the challenge of novel circumstances.

Part two also offers the nonacademic an insider's look at university life—at least at Harvard. You may not like what you see, particularly if you believe that professors are scientists who demurely go about the search for truth, oblivious to the concerns and immune from the foibles of the "real world." In truth, as Wilson lets us see, universities are highly politicized, as competing ideologies struggle for supremacy, both political and economic. Again, however, Wilson's candor lets his character shine through. He did not allow the so-called molecular wars, which attempted to make biological reductionism the one Eternal Verity and made "ecology a dirty word," defeat him. He simply kept on with his appointed rounds, working within the frame of evolutionary biology, despite relentless attacks from his opponents who claimed that his kind of biology "was infested by stamp collectors who lacked the wit to transform their subject into a modern science." Wilson's account of life at Harvard also impresses me because he, despite his renown, continues to enjoy undergraduate teaching, and in fact believes in it as an obligation. Finally, part two helps the reader position Wilson, a self-professed social conservative, in the ongoing "culture wars." The scientific "political correctness" police have descended on him more than once. He remarks, with droll wit, that "in the liberal dovecotes of Harvard University, a reactionary professor is like an atheist in a monastery." What is remarkable is that criticism, deserved or undeserved, did not stifle Wilson's inquiry but rather encouraged it, serving as a goad to further research and theoretical refinement.

No doubt, Wilson's work on human nature and sociobiology has been and remains controversial, all the more so in the wake of the uproar over *The Bell Curve*. Wilson contends that the human genome defines a unique human nature, in a way that creates "a gravitational pull toward a fixed mean. It gathers people in all societies into the narrow statistical circle that we define as human nature." But if this is the case, then biology, while not destiny, necessarily plays an enormous role in determining human behavior *and our judgment of it*. It means, contrary to the relativism that tends to dominate liberal social science, that cul-

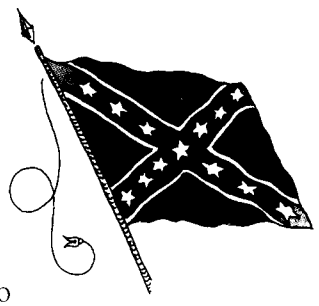
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Help Us Fight To Save Our Southern Heritage!

"Civil Rights" groups have launched a campaign to eliminate ALL symbols of Confederate history and heritage, including the removal of all Confederate monuments from public property! If you're ready to fight back, then Join A Winning Team!

The Heritage Preservation Association

HPA is a nonprofit, national membership organization that utilizes educational, legal and political resources to protect Southern symbols, Southern culture, and Southern civil rights.



- **In Georgia** we educated voters and lobbied the General Assembly. We defeated an anti-flag boycott and a liberal governor to help save the Georgia flag. We endorsed and helped elect several pro-flag state senators and state representatives.
- **In Virginia** we defeated attempts to censor the movie "Gettysburg," helped save the state song and are fighting to return the Confederate flag to the Danville Confederate Museum. We endorsed and helped elect a city council member who supports our efforts.
- **In South Carolina** we lobbied the General Assembly to defeat an anti-flag compromise and we successfully opposed two lawsuits that would have removed the Confederate flag from the State House. We lobbied and helped save General Wade Hampton Boulevard from being renamed Martin Luther King Boulevard.
- **In North Carolina** we are seeking legal action against various school systems that discriminate against children who wear or display Confederate symbols.

Annual Membership of $39.95 includes a bi-monthly newsletter, special membership discounts and access to HERITAGE-BBS, a nationwide computer system. Mention this ad and save 10% (VISA, *Mastercard*, AMEX)

To join by phone or request more information, call

800-TO-DIXIE

HPA • P.O. Box 98209 • Atlanta, GA 30359
(404) 928-2714 • Fax (404) 928-2719

tures do not stand on equal moral footing, and that neither do individuals. However, Wilson continues, such a hypothesis is not a genetic justification for either a racist or sexist status quo. Indeed, the issue of gene-culture coevolution is, he contends, "the central problem of the social sciences, and moreover one of the great unexplored domains of science generally."

The place to conclude is with Wilson's own observation at the beginning of his book, that he has been "a happy man in a terrible century." The 20th century is the most remarkable in history, bearing witness to people and events both noble and ignoble, from Albert Einstein and Mother Teresa to Adolf Hitler, from Kitty Hawk to My Lai. These have been both the best and worst of times. So much has seemed to be within our collective reach, such as world peace; and so much, sadly, continues to elude us.

The possibility of an anthropogenic mass extinction of life, whatever the scientific uncertainty of the event, poses an enormous risk to civilization itself. We also have the knowledge that could lead us away from the annihilation of life toward a postindustrial condition of sustainability. World business leaders speak of "changing course." And business men write of "the ecology of commerce," the possibility of running industry and conducting the transactions of human life in ways that benefit us without despoiling the planet. Yet we do not change. Could it be that such conundrums are one reason why Wilson calls this a "terrible century"?

Pessimism is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Wilson remains positive in his belief that men and women, informed by scientific knowledge and ethical wisdom, can fashion a good society. My interest in and continuing admiration of him springs from a sense that Ed Wilson is a giver, one who lives up to his obligations, both personal and social, rather than a taker, one who exists in parasitical relation to culture. I also admire his deep and abiding love of the living earth and his sense that humans are stealing the blessings reserved for future generations. I had long ago come to consider him one of if not the most consequential conservationists of our time. His autobiography showed me more: he has conserved in his personal life much of what is esteemable in human being.

c

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Light Literature

by Stephen L. Tanner

Cashbox
by Richard S. Wheeler
New York: Forge;
381 pp., $23.95

◆

One of the casualties of the current culture wars is the Western. No other genre, it seems, is so politically incorrect. The Western is accused of racism, sexism, and imperialism—three strikes and you're out. These charges receive sophisticated expression in Jane Tompkins' *West of Everything*, published under the prestigious imprint of Oxford University Press. According to its thesis, "The Western doesn't have anything to do with the West as such. It isn't about the encounter between civilization and the frontier. It is about men's fear of losing their mastery, and hence their identity, both of which the Western tirelessly reinvents." The cowboy astride a horse exemplifies an "ethos of dominance." This horse-rider relationship is a "politics," and each appearance of a horseman on the horizon "celebrates" male hegemony. (I suppose we are to assume that if men hadn't had such an overweening desire for political power, they might have found another means to traverse those large distances in the West.) Cattle as well as women are political victims: according to Tompkins, the John Wayne cattle-drive film *Red River* is really a film about enslavement and massacre—of cattle. The filming technique, she suggests, helps disguise this fact by only showing the cows from the side so we can't look into their anguished faces and sympathize with their political plight.

Tompkins stretches the motto "everything is political" to the limits. She views even landscape as politics: "The harshness of the Western landscape [which she seems to reduce to John Ford's panoramic shots of Monument Valley] is so rhetorically persuasive that an entire code of values [racist, sexist, patriarchal] is in place, rock solid, from the outset, without anyone's ever saying a word." I wonder what a Navajo woman would make of this astonishing assertion that the landscape of the Southwest is sexually and racially oppressive. Or what response would we expect from an ecofeminist who views nature (including desert) as a woman victimized?

Besides seeing politics lurking behind every cactus, Tompkins is reductive in another way. She treats novels and films as a single entity, asserting that "when you read a Western novel or watch a Western movie on television, you are in the same world no matter what the medium: the hero is the same, the story line is the same, the setting, the values, the actions are the same." This is generalization from limited sampling. The commercial exploitation of familiar formulas notwithstanding, the Western genre taken as a whole displays much variety in content and quality. And furthermore, novels and films are too different to be lumped together. One has the uncomfortable feeling that Tompkins' research consisted largely of renting a stack of videos from her local Blockbusters. This would explain her remarkable claim that there are no Indians in Westerns. What she really means is that the main Indian roles in a certain group of Western films were played by white actors—Jeff Chandler as an Apache, for example. Totally ignored are the many Western novels that explore the Indian perspective perceptively and sympathetically. To lump together the wide range of Western novels—differing so much in quality of writing, historical research, and imaginative vision—with products of Hollywood's film system is unfair and misleading.

Richard S. Wheeler's fiction provides a counterexample to such generalized and reductive characterizations of the Western. Wheeler began writing Westerns in the mid-1970's, at first for money, but then with an increasing desire to tell more realistic and historically accurate stories than the usual Western provides. (See his essay "Writing Offbeat Westerns" in the August 1991 issue of *Chronicles*.) He was interested in character more than plot, and in characters with ordinary strengths and weaknesses rather than in mythic heroes and unalloyed villains. He wanted to widen the appeal of Westerns to attract a more educated and literate readership, including women. This meant upgrading the vocabulary, using figurative language more extensively and skillfully, widening the range of characters (male and female), and getting deeper inside their minds than the usual action-adventure allows. It also meant treating aspects of the Western frontier largely ignored in the familiar formulas associated with the cattle kingdom.

He was repelled by the anomie of recent Western films and television shows with their cynical violence and amoral nightmare atmosphere. "These malignant stories," he says, "drained away the complex, warm social relationships that occur in real life. The tender emotions vanished—love, loyalty, mercy, laughter." Believing that such dark views along with the narrow parameters of the commonplace Western have distorted or extinguished the public's interest in the frontier, he has endeavored to write stories with characters who have values and beliefs, who are connected with others, who can laugh and cry, who can shape their lives with dreams and effort. He sets them within moral frameworks and restores what he sees as "the traditional virtues, honesty, bravery, courage, loyalty, warmth and sunniness" that people once treasured in fiction. He suspects that much recent "literary" fiction has abandoned this traditional ground and that entertainment novelists are appropriating it. He has certainly staked out his claim. But in doing so he is writing against the commercial grain. The readership of mythic Westerns seems stable (witness the popularity of Louis L'Amour), and publishers do not want to experiment. Fortunately, he has found publishers for his approach, but it has not been easy. His is a conservative endeavor: Wheeler is firmly convinced that the best values and traditions of the American frontier, which are being distorted by commercial exploitation and myopic revisionist attacks, are worth conserving.

Cashbox is the culmination so far of

BooksNow
To order these books, (24hrs, 365 days) please call (800) 962-6651 (Ext. 5200)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what Wheeler is aiming at. It is the story of a Montana silver-mining town that blossoms and withers between 1888 and 1893. The town is modeled on the actual mining town of Castle, and the novel reflects a good deal of historical research. The descriptions of mining technology, frontier journalism, labor relations, silver politics, and the social makeup and activities of such a town are informative and bear the stamp of authenticity. It is the story of a community rather than of a single protagonist. The cast of characters, men and women, is large and varied. The chapters alternate in their focus on individuals, and these lives are skillfully blended into a vivid and at times moving portrait of that unique social phenomenon, the evanescent frontier boom town. Unlike the characters of formula Westerns, the people of *Cashbox* combine virtues and faults, ideals and frailties, and they change and grow. There is no mythic hero or stage-property heroine, no chasing and shooting, no town taming, no feuding or vengeance, and no final walkdown. There is plenty of love interest, but it isn't young love or simply physical love. It is middle-aged love, domestic interactions, tender relationships besides those of physical sex—relationships in which men and women struggle to recognize and respect the broader needs and desires of each other.

The epigraph from Thoreau's "Walking," an essay that elaborates the symbolic implications of the West and westering, suggests Wheeler's principal theme: the West as a place for dreams, tests of character, and experiments in human possibilities. If this symbolic West is a myth, it is a myth worth preserving. And popular fiction is not a bad place for preserving it, especially since current "literary" fiction often seems indifferent if not hostile to that task. A book that convincingly portrays the positive heritage of the Western frontier, and can be read by everyone, does much to hold our society together. As Joseph Conrad observed, "We are the creatures of our light literature much more than is generally suspected in a world which prides itself on being scientific and practical, and in possession of incontrovertible theories." For those who value the influence of the frontier on the American character, it is fortunate that a writer as skillful as Wheeler is committed, despite adverse ideologies and unsympathetic publishing trends, to enlarging and revitalizing the Western genre.

Stephen L. Tanner is a professor of English at Brigham Young University.

BooksNow
To order these books, (24hrs, 365 days) please call (800) 962-6651 (Ext. 5200)

Philanthropy Is Bunk

by Richard D. Lamm

Importing Revolution: Open Borders and the Radical Agenda
by William R. Hawkins
Monterey, Virginia: American Immigration Control Foundation and U.S. Business & Industrial Council Educational Foundation; 209 pp., $8.00

◆

Importing Revolution tells the sad and tragic tale of how the Ford Foundation has funded practically every pro-immigration group in America for the last 30 years. It is hard to read this book without concluding that the Ford Foundation has misused and abused its original purpose, as well as its tax-exempt status, by advancing the political agenda of those interests which desire open borders. The cumulative case is overwhelming: the Ford Foundation has used a significant portion of its massive resources to fund a number of radical organizations whose agenda would be displeasing to ordinary Americans. That said, I was left with the wish that William Hawkins' thesis were *actually correct*; i.e., that the Ford Foundation *were* quietly trying to import revolution and destabilize the United States. I wish it were true only in the sense that the situation would then be easy to correct. One major congressional investigation, a crusading district attorney or attorney general, a few people in jail, and the problem would be behind us. The irony is that the truth is even more threatening than Hawkins perceives: his villains are not deliberately subversive people but well-meaning and tragically mistaken liberals who honestly believe that what they are doing will strengthen the nation.

The Ford Foundation gives away approximately $300 million per year ($1.2 million a day for a 250-day working year). Since 1968, over $31 million has gone to a series of organizations seeking either to open American borders or greatly to expand immigration. These organizations seek multiple goals, including the establishment of "the right to immigrate" (to the United States, of course) as a basic human right. Other organizations are hard at work to expand the definition of "refugee" to include "economic refugees," and to give full rights (including the right to vote in American elections) to illegal aliens. The list is long, and I believe most Americans would be extremely upset with almost every item of it. Organization by organization, grant by grant, the author builds his case. Clearly, there is no immigration-related cause too far to the left not to attract big dollars from the Ford Foundation. Speaking of these latter groups, the author says, "To them, immigrants are not viewed as 'teeming masses' waiting to be lifted to a higher level of existence. They are merely a tool for accomplishing exactly the opposite—destabilizing and eroding America's current residents and their society—all in an effort to further their own self-consciously Marxist ends." Like the prosecutors of the Salem witch trials, however, the author has discovered too many witches while overlooking the main forces behind immigration in the United States. However grievous the conduct by the Ford Foundation, one has to differentiate between a mistake and a conspiracy. A version of Gresham's Law exists by which false accusations drive out true ones.

Ten years ago I coauthored a book (*The Immigration Time Bomb: The Fragmenting of America*) pointing to the incredible pressures building on our borders, to the need to set some rational limits to immigration, and to the dangers America faces if the melting pot fails in its work. I have been hotly engaged in debating this subject ever since. Truth be told, I have run into more opposition in the Christian churches and the Jewish synagogues than I have among whatever remains of the left in the United States. The philosophy which motivated the Ford Foundation is not dissimilar to that which motivates libertarians, some neoconservatives, and a large number of religious groups in the United States. It is so

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

counterproductive to the long-range future of America that it often does seem like a conspiracy. Yet the problem, dear Brutus, lies not so much in the Ford Foundation as in our natural ambivalence about immigration. The real problem is how tightly Americans still cling to the myths surrounding the Statue of Liberty. Historically, immigration has been an important part of American history: we have taken in an amazing number of poor people whose children and grandchildren are, today, our leading citizens. But immigration is a policy that cannot be blindly continued.

The biggest challenge is how to change a policy which, though once successful, has outlived its usefulness. What once made sense when we were an empty continent with vast extents of empty land no longer does so in a country of 260 million people who have constructed a massive social welfare system that, for good reason, is increasingly subject to challenge. It seems to me that the time is long past for a national debate on the justification for future immigration in which we ask ourselves some hard questions, including:

—How many people do we want in the America of our grandchildren?
—Does the United States need more people for purposes of national defense?
—Does it have excess land in need of population?
—Do we require more people to grow food?
—Will more people improve the quality of our health care or the quality of our education?
—Do we need additional workers for our economy?
—Is the United States a too-homogeneous country requiring more infusions of "diversity"?
—Does it make sense for America to import a new generation of poor people each year?
—Is it in our national interest to create a second underclass before we have solved the problems of the existing one?

I submit that every problem I tried to solve during my 12 years as governor of Colorado was made worse by immigration. The American economy does not need more unskilled workers; it needs to find ways to employ our own unskilled. Our school systems were marginal enough before the influx of great numbers of people with new and expensive linguistic needs. Additional immigrants also make the problems of congestion, air pollution, water pollution, and the closing of open space worse, not better.

The Ford Foundation is only a small part of the problem. Its motive lies not so much in subversion as in the unchallenged national myth. The heavy immigration that we are now experiencing is not due so much to the efforts of the New Left as to the inarticulate middle which instinctively realizes that we are not strengthening our country by yearly waves of Third World immigration, but fails nevertheless to disenthrall itself from the myth.

William Hawkins does perform a valuable service by bringing together full evidence of the cumulative contribution of the Ford Foundation to the open-border cause; he is less inaccurate than simply incomplete. The Marxists are a cheering section for immigration, not the driving force. They would be as irrelevant to demography as they are to economics, but for the schizophrenia of the American public. I came away from his book deeply regretting missed opportunities for aiding our own poor. What an irony that, by its policies, the Ford Foundation should have intensified the problem of poverty in the United States, while at the same time contributing to the further Balkanization of America. The people at Ford are guilty, not of treason or subversion, but of public policy malpractice, pure and simple.

Richard D. Lamm, governor of Colorado from 1975 to 1987, is director of the Center for Public Policy and Contemporary Issues at the University of Denver.

Beyond Trash

by Clyde Wilson

Battle Flag
by Bernard Cornwell
New York: HarperCollins;
384 pp., $20.00

◆

In the middle part of this century one of the main staples of the Anglo-American reading public was the historical novel, or romance. Such "swashbucklers" were not great literature, but they had their virtues. In the hands of skilled writers like C.S. Forester or Kenneth Roberts, they introduced a great many people to some decent history which they would not otherwise have encountered.

Of course, "historical" themes have often been employed by great writers—as in *War and Peace*, George Garrett's Elizabethan novels, or, in the case of the War Between the States, such works as Andrew Lytle's *The Long Night*, Caroline Gordon's *None Shall Look Back*, or Gore Vidal's *Lincoln*. But I am speaking of writers a cut below this level—though the dividing line between a great and a very good writer is not necessarily that sharply defined. Historical novelists like Forester and Roberts and many others flourished in a day when millions read them along with William Faulkner in the old *Saturday Evening Post*.

Forester's *Captain Horatio Hornblower*, Roberts' *Northwest Passage*, Rafael Sabatini's *Captain Blood* and *Scaramouche*, and Kathleen Winsor's *Forever Amber*, along with many others, became lavish movie productions that brought to the masses a not-contemptible elementary introduction to important epochs of the past (and managed to entertain them without gore, four-letter words, or onscreen copulation). Similar works that were excellent but which did not make it into the movies were the Civil War and World War stories of John W. Thomason and James Warner Bellah, and the colonial novels of Inglis Fletcher. Though romanticized, such works were generally accurate in historical setting. Their fictional characters were genuinely representative, if somewhat unnaturally highlighted, persons, and they mingled with real historical figures who were authentically portrayed and brought to life.

If there is any merit in this genre of literature, we have indeed fallen on evil times. The staples of the reading public, and the viewing public, are now such pseudohistorical fictions as the works of the execrable John Jakes and the faker Alex Haley. The trouble with such books and the sordid television docudramas that are made from them is that, while

BooksNow
To order these books, (24hrs, 365 days) please call (800) 962-6651 (Ext. 5200)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they claim to be historically researched, they lack any connection with or understanding of the spirit of the times and peoples, the social and psychological context, they are allegedly portraying. They are historical soap operas, pandering to the most superficial sentimentalities and concupiscences of our own time rather than educating us to the far and unknown country of the past.

What such a decline reveals, of course, is what everybody already knows, that the powers-that-be in American cultural logistics have essentially lost (or rather never had) any connection with the fabric of American history and society, or indeed of Western civilization: they live in a multicultural world of ephemeral slogans and stimulations. The English are not quite so degenerate, in this respect at least, as measured by the fine set of historical romances about the American War Between the States that have issued in rapid succession from the pen of Bernard Cornwell. The recently published *Battle Flag* follows *The Starbuck Chronicles*, *Copperhead*, and *Rebel*, which are already in mass paperback editions. Cornwell, who before he turned to our war was already well-known for his Sharpe's Rifles stories of the Napoleonic wars, has the virtues of those older historical romancers mentioned above.

The hero, Nate Starbuck, is the scapegrace son of a Boston Abolitionist preacher who finds himself in Richmond at the outbreak of the war and is adopted into the Southern community and army. Starbuck is a convincing character, with psychic depth, and Cornwell includes him with a panoply of other characters who, unlike Jakes' or Haley's, actually think, talk, and act like real 19th-century Americans. The characters sometimes verge on caricature, but they are authentic and well-drawn caricatures; that is, they are genuine representative types.

As Starbuck participates in the fate of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia in Falconer's Legion—*Battle Flag* concludes with Second Manassas—he encounters a host of real Southerners, and some real Northerners as well. There is the supercilious blueblood, the tough mountaineer sergeant, the country schoolmaster who develops an unexpected taste and capacity for warfare, the born-again slave trader, and many others. These characters ring true as real types from our past. And on each side there is the ambiguous mixture of good and evil, honor and vileness. For instance, of two Southern Unionists one is a sincere Abolitionist and the other a plundering opportunist. Real historical personages—in *Battle Flag*, John Pope and Stonewall Jackson—are integrated skillfully by Cornwell and portrayed authentically. His battle narratives are as well done, as vivid, moving—and wrenching—as they can be.

It is important that Americans regain a real sense of our history that transcends the slogans and cartooning of the mass media. We will not get it from the vast establishment of academic historianship which has bureaucratized itself into irrelevance to the public discourse. Historians, increasingly and for the most part, speak only to each other (and even then they don't listen). If we do begin to recover some sense of the past, it may be from writers like Cornwell. *The Starbuck Chronicles* is a pleasant and easy place to start your reeducation on the War Between the States.

Clyde Wilson is a professor of American history at the University of South Carolina.

BooksNow
To order these books, (24hrs, 365 days) please call (800) 962-6651 (Ext. 5200)

Brief Mentions

Harry Elmer Barnes As I Knew Him. *By Robert H. Barnes (Worland, Wyoming: High Plains Publishing Company, Inc.), 129 pp., $19.50*

"Harry's gone mad," yelled Mrs. Barnes. "I just saw him running around the side of the house with a gun, muttering something about the plumbers." Young Robert ran outside, and there found his dad, distinguished historian and man of letters, lying on his belly, blasting away with his old Army rifle at the foundation of their house. "The g--damn plumbers have been chipping away at this wall for two days," explained Harry. "A hundred rounds of this will take care of it before the bastards bankrupt me!" Robert Barnes's delightful reminiscence of his father reminds us of a time when real men still existed. Whether arguing, drinking, hunting, or cussing, Harry Elmer Barnes lived life with a gusto that is rare and rarely acceptable today. He inherited from the pietism of his parents and from the austere rural region of Upstate New York, where he was born in 1889 and raised on a farm, both a faith in the virtues of hard work and honesty and a short tolerance for anyone lacking the same. Not unlike his good friend H.L. Mencken, he was master of the bon mot who took pride in the force and ingenuity of his invective. His comment about one of Robert's girlfriends—"She has all the beauty, charm and erudition of a 10-month-old heifer"—was characteristic of him, both as a father and as leader of the historiographical school known as Revisionism. From World War I to the Tet Offensive, no American scholar spoke more honestly about, and fought more tirelessly against, American globalism in its various guises—whether as a war against communism, a crusade for human rights, or a rendezvous with destiny—than Harry Barnes. The terse titles of his essays and catchphrases from his prose—*Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, the "Court Historians," the "Blackout Boys," the "Smearbund"—remind us how old political correctness really is in this country and how difficult it has always been to speak truth to power. He taught at Harvard, Columbia, and a half-dozen other schools; was one of the chief editorialists for the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain; and left behind some 40 volumes of scholarship and cultural comment. Barnes died in 1968 at the age of 80, dropping dead in mid-sentence as he rose from table and offered his guests a caustic toast to the new Republican candidate for President. "To Richard Milhous Nixon, may the son—"

—Theodore Pappas

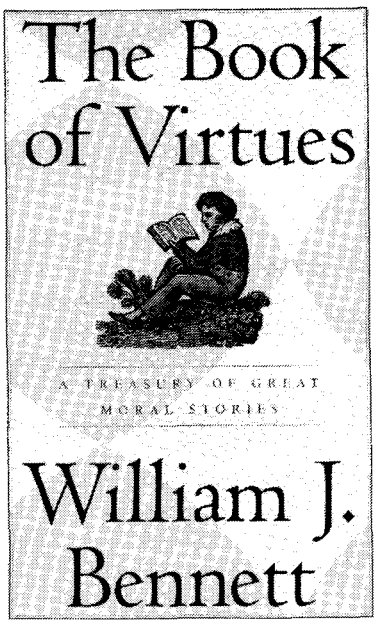
For Immediate Service
CHRONICLES
NEW SUBSCRIBERS
TOLL FREE NUMBER

1-800-877-5459

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Giant 831 pages ★
Title & author index

HUNDREDS of classic moral stories to help shape your child's character — AND taste for good reading



$27.50 in stores — yours FREE

Rush Limbaugh explains why he gives this extraordinary anthology by Reagan Cabinet member William Bennett his unqualified endorsement:

> "*The Book of Virtues* is built on an old philosophical principle nearly forgotten in the public discussion (and in certain recent presidential campaigns), but it is an idea I have long championed: Character matters. What a concept! But beware — some of the lessons in this book are rooted in religion, which means the anthology will be ruled unconstitutional if carried into an American school.
>
> It belongs, however, in every home. *The Book of Virtues* is a superb collection, certain to fortify you and yours for a lifetime of morality, goodness, and right thinking."

Mr. Bennett groups the selections according to the ten virtues or good habits they aim to instill:

Self-Discipline ★ Compassion
★ Responsibility ★ Friendship
★ Work ★ Courage ★ Perseverance
★ Honesty ★ Loyalty ★ Faith

Each section carries its own introductory essay, and the selections have explanatory notes where necessary. You get an amazing 384 selections. Most are stories, of course, but you also get generous helpings of inspiring verse.

The selections range from half a page to several pages — all short enough to be read aloud at bedtime, during a class or homeschool session, or by young readers on their own. Adults will be delighted to meet many old favorites again, and to discover neglected gems that enriched the moral life of previous generations.

"America has long been in need of a C. S. Lewis . . . William J. Bennett, the former Secretary of Education and drug czar, may be as close in intellectual likeness to Lewis as America has had at the national level." —CAL THOMAS

"Mr. Bennett has created a treasury no conservative parent would want to be without. For conservative parents know the role such stories can play in moral education. The early building of character depends heavily on examples, both in this world and in literature . . . . What Mr. Bennett has provided, then, is not just a source of enjoyment and literary education, but a contribution to moral literacy and a path back to social order for future generations." —*National Review*

How to get this $27.50 treasury FREE

How the Club Works

Every 4 weeks (13 times a year) you get a free copy of the Club Bulletin, which offers you the Featured Selection plus a good choice of Alternates. Books on current issues, religion, education, homeschooling, politics, children's books, etc. — all of interest to conservatives. ★ If you want the Featured Selection, do nothing. It will come automatically. ★ If you don't want the Featured Selection, or you do want an Alternate, indicate your wishes on the handy card enclosed with your Bulletin and return it by the deadline date. ★ The majority of Club books are offered at 20-50% discounts, plus a charge for shipping and handling. ★ As soon as you buy and pay for 3 books at regular Club prices, your membership may be ended at any time, either by you or by the Club. ★ If you ever receive a Featured Selection without having had 10 days to decide if you want it, you may return it at Club expense for full credit. ★ The Club will offer regular Superbargains, mostly at 70-95% discounts plus shipping and handling. Superbargains do not count toward fulfilling your Club obligation, but do enable you to buy fine books at giveaway prices. ★ Only one membership per household.

CONSERVATIVE BOOK CLUB
33 OAKLAND AVENUE • HARRISON, N.Y. 10528

Please accept my membership in the Club and send me FREE the 831-page, $27.50 *Book of Virtues* by William J. Bennett. I agree to buy 3 additional books at regular Club prices over the next 18 months. I also agree to the Club rules spelled out in this coupon.

CCUL-111

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ *State* _____ *Zip* _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letter From Italy

by Andrea Sciffo

The Gay Nihilism of Umberto Eco

◆

Simone Weil wrote, with respect to literature, that "nothing is more beautiful, wonderful, ever new, ever more surprising, more sweetly and lastingly intoxicating than *the good*. Nothing is more arid, sad, monotonous and cranky than *the bad*. Such are authentic goodness and evil. The fictional good and bad are opposite. The fictional good is cranky and flat. The fictional bad is varied, interestingly attractive, profound, and full of seductions."

This statement could well be applied to the two novels of the celebrated Italian semioticist Umberto Eco. One might even add that passage of Nietzsche's which accuses Plato of "inventing good and evil . . . the most ominous of errors . . . [such that] Christianity is nothing more than platonism for the people." It is indeed nihilism that hides behind the "nominalism" in Eco's writings. In particular, *The Name of the Rose* (1980) paints a grandiose fresco intended to discredit the revealed truth of Christian faith.

This has long been the belief of the Italian Jesuit priest Guido Sommavilla, a literary critic and the translator into Italian of the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar, the Catholic theologian. In contrast to his Jesuit confreres in the United States (who awarded Eco a degree *Honoris Causa* at Loyola University), Father Sommavilla warns about the "little bottle of poison" spilled over the pages of Eco's novel. Sommavilla's comments about Eco in his 1993 book *Uomo, Diavolo, e Dio nella Letteratura Contemporanea* and about Eco's most famous work, *The Name of the Rose*, in a widely publicized interview with *Expresso* (in November 1993) is what rekindled debate here in Italy over Eco's work.

The controversy actually began back in 1981, with Sommavilla's review of *The Name of the Rose*. The book's underlying theses, he argued, were that good and evil are indistinguishable, that truth does not exist, and that "God" is solely a "name." The Latin hexameter at the end of the novel (*Nuda Nomina Tenemus*: "We have only bare names") seems to be the motto of structuralism, the school of thought to which Eco adheres. Besides, there is enough evidence to show how erroneous philosophical orientations lead to despair, how the nominalism of the structuralists paves the way for nihilism. Lévi-Strauss had already affirmed in 1991 that "the ultimate end of the human sciences is not to constitute man, but to dissolve him." Similarly, in a 1977 letter to writer Rodolfo Quadrelli, the Catholic Italian philosopher Augusto Del Noce spoke of the "decadence" of the French *Noveaux Philosophers* of the 1960's and defined structuralism as "barbarism without a name."

From the literary point of view, *The Name of the Rose* has several obscure points. For example, the horse ride (First Day, "Prime") looks a little too much like a page from Voltaire. In the 1980's the Cretan writer Sokratous accused Eco of plagiarism. The trial that followed eventually ended in victory for Eco. But were the allegations valid? If so, then we must question Eco's contention that he writes "for the pure love of writing." *The Name of the Rose* is clearly an ideological novel, similar to the 18th-century works of the Enlightenment or to those of contemporary authors who attack the very idea of *truth* as well as the logical principle of noncontradiction.

Furthermore, the book (as well as J.J. Annaud's 1985 film based on the book) presents a Middle Ages of "dark legend," of violence, horror, obscurantism, cupidity, and darkness. Yet, as medievalist Marco Tangheroni of the University of Pisa has shown, this is a "deceitful account of the Middle Ages [that] was formulated in virtue of an anti-Christian hatred that emerged between the 18th and 19th centuries so as to deform consciously a glorious and enlightened epoch of the history of humanity . . . and to defame those ages because they were completely permeated by faith in the Gospel." Thus, the apparently innocent narrative *game* of the semioticist is not an open play of *signs* but rather a secret plan for a precise goal: atheism.

The deception, however, does not go unobserved by the more attentive readers. The protagonist of Eco's novel, Friar William, is the fictional transformation of the 14th-century Franciscan philosopher William of Ockham. Yet a distinguished Ockhamist, Professor Alessandro Ghisalberti from the Catholic University of Milan, observes that "Eco's affirmations are completely false; they can be made only by someone who has never read the texts of Ockham firsthand." The insinuation is strong, but Eco has not denied it. Perhaps it is enough, in tendentious books, to arouse superficially those doubts which are destined to ferment precisely in superficial minds.

In this way, *The Name of the Rose* almost resembles a programmatic manifesto of structuralist nominalism, the aim of which is to demonstrate that *behind* words, there is nothing—a vision contrary to that of realists who argue that every discourse refers always to some *reality*. Eco's nominalism is, therefore, really a "short-circuit." Every discourse refers to another discourse, in an infinite *feedback*, and this prevents any attainment of the real truth of things. This is the characteristic of structuralist paradigms by which the *structure* is a framework in which things do not exist "in themselves" but only in relation to each other. Man becomes defined as "a tangle of relations," a network of intercommunications. Nothing means anything. Every (individual) thing refers always (and only) to itself.

All of which ends in nothingness, the *nothing* to which each thing is reduced. For Friar William, "the root of sin is the very same root of sanctity," i.e., the *libido* of Freud, the motor of history. The physical law of entropy asserts that "everything runs down." At the time of the Greek Presocratic philosophers, Heraclitus said *Panta Rei* (everything moves).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Umberto Eco took Heraclitus at his word and perhaps "moved" some pages from L. Pawel and J. Bergier's *Le matin des Magiciens* (1960) to his *Foucault's Pendulum* (1989), appropriating them (Part II, Chapter VII) in not too discreet a manner.

These are not merely insinuations. Originality moves to the second floor when the intent of artistic creation is to *reduce* the multiplicity of reality's phenomena to a single *ground*, to Freudian "lust," to Schopenhauer's vitalistic, biological panting. In this way differences become nullified, goodness equivalent to wickedness, love to sin, Christ to Judas. There is scorn for any suggestion of truth because everything is up for ridicule. Of course, according to such logic, even this assertion becomes ridiculous. Indeed, as Aristotle pointed out, even the statement "truth does not exist" amounts nevertheless to the affirmation of a truth, since the effort to free oneself from metaphysics always requires another metaphysic. At one point in the book, Friar William shows his true hand: "What I wanted to say is that there is little difference between the ardor of the Seraphim and the ardor of Lucifer, since they are born always from a drastic explosion of the will. . . . I dread not knowing the distinction any longer." As Pascal observed, it is only the fool who cannot grasp the differences between things.

It is known that nominalism originated with John Roscelin at the end of the 11th century, and arose from the conviction that "universals"—ideas or essences—were merely names, not reality. This may well explain the "laughter" of contemporary nominalists. Augusto Del Noce opined in his letter to Quadrelli that "the fashionable nihilism of today is a *gay* nihilism, in the two senses that it is smug and that it has as its symbol homosexuality. . . . Such a nihilism is exactly the reduction of every value to the 'value of exchange.'" Is this a return to the "gay science" of Nietzsche? Will laughter dissolve moral reflection? The answer lies in that historic rupture with tradition: the Enlightenment.

Eco cunningly defines himself as a person of "Byzantine Enlightenment—one who does not exclude the possibility that even in that labyrinth which is the universe of signs—in which we are immersed—there is a hidden explanation." Nevertheless, as is the case with all Enlightenment types, he rejects the decisive thing, namely, *evil* or *sin*. *The Name of the Rose* is an invitation to laugh at everything, above all sanctity, sin, and the Incarnation.

For Father Sommavilla, "the book seeks to acknowledge the ridiculous substance of all reality, the confusion of the highest values with the lowest." There is a passage in the novel that makes this clear: "to attempt to redeem (with a diabolical reversal) the highest through the acceptance of the lowest." Here gnosticism rears its head and leads author and reader to that incomprehensible garden of signs and meanings. But gnosticism is the inveterate enemy of truth, as the Fathers of the Church had pointed out—from St. Irenaeus of Lyon to St. Augustine; and in the 20th century, from Eric Voegelin to Augusto Del Noce.

Emblematic, therefore, is Eco's contention that "if God exists, it is the God of St. Thomas Aquinas; with him one can reason. We have studied the same books. We are both former students of the same university." Beneath the alibi of a facile irony lie the "seeds" of a nostalgia for the Christian truth not yet completely canceled by gnostic dualism. Thus even the work and the life of Umberto Eco confirm the maxim of Louis Pasteur: "A little science alienates one from God; more science brings one to Him."

The loss of a center and the death of light in modern art have a "religious" origin. As in the famous "Prologue in Heaven" of Goethe's *Faust*, the questions of our secularized age proceed from uneasiness with God. The root of the evils that besiege us is not "social" but "metaphysical." It grows in the spirit and is nurtured by an equivocation that separates the soul from the body. The results of this line of thinking are apparent in Eco himself, who responded to the Progressives' defeat in Italy's March 1994 election by declaring: "*Cazzo! l'abbiamo presa nel culo per mille anni!*" If things are as Eco believes—if "we have only bare names" and no longer reality—then his obscene comment (that "we have taken it in the backside for 1,000 years") is appropriate. In fact, it is only symptomatic. For the nominalist intellectual of the left there remain only "bare words" and vulgarity, obscene language, indeed *coprolalia*.

But, thank God, in order to contemplate the authentic white rose of revealed truth, there is the third Canto, the *Paradise* of Dante Alighieri's "divine comedy," rather than an elaborate neo-Enlightenment fiction whose apotheosis is dissolution.

* * *

Postscript from the translator: It may be recalled that Umberto Eco, together with Jacques Derrida and 38 other intellectuals, signed a document called "The Appeal to Vigilance" that was published in *Le Monde* on July 13, 1993. The document deplores the rise of conservatism (which these intellectuals called the "far right") as a threat to democracy and human lives on one hand and as the emergence of a new fascism on the other. The signatories resolved to form a committee that would "out" any institutions (publishing houses, the press, universities) that have a connection with the far right. They also resolved to refuse all collaboration in journals, collective works, radio and TV programs as well as in colloquia directed and organized by people with such political beliefs. This tyrannical zealotry has fortunately been deplored by honest journals of the Amer-

Dispatches from

The Last Ditch

Anarcho-pessimists,
crypto-Copperheads,
post-neo-Objectivists,
and other enemies of the
permanent regime
opining monthly, from
individualist and European
American perspectives, on
the end of civilization

Write for free issue
Trial subscription (4 issues), $15
12 issues, $42 24 issues, $77

WTM Enterprises
P.O. Box 224 Dept. CH
Roanoke, IN 46783-0224

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ican left such as *Telos*. It is a display of intolerance not out of character for such enlightened ironists as Eco and Derrida.

Andrea Sciffo is a poet and journalist in Monza. This article was translated by Nino Langiulli, a professor of philosophy at St. Francis College in Brooklyn and author, most recently, of Possibility, Necessity, and Existence: Abbagnano and his Predecessors *(Temple University Press).*

Letter From Virginia

by Wayne Allensworth

People From Nowhere

◆

Virginia, the cradle of the American Republic, has proved to be a particularly tempting locus for the designs of the capitalist utopians. Our own conservative Republican governor, George Allen, with the general support of the state party and Washington's Republican press organ, has led the charge of the developers' earthmovers on the state's countryside, the northern counties being the target of choice, despite the area's very low levels of unemployment. Where Lee's army and Mosby's raiders and the Army of the Potomac once fought over the principles of preservation, the "conservatives" and the baying jackals of progress are sweeping down on the green Virginia pastures and the battlefields of our great national struggle, acting as the vanguard of the urban and suburban vandals they represent. They threaten our heritage, both regional and national, with strip malls and housing developments that spring up like mushrooms after a rain alongside "greenways" that pave over farms and villages and erase a whole landscape from our memory, detaching our postmodern world from the bedrock of our past and further eroding the viability of authentic communities.

For most of last year, the state's political and capitalist classes devoted themselves to ramming through the state legislature the taxpayer-subsidized development of "Disney's America," a sprawling canker whose nucleus was to have been a history theme park near the town of Haymarket in Prince William County, only a few miles from the Manassas battlefield. Allen and company portrayed the successful (for now) anti-Disney movement as composed solely of anti-capitalist liberals, green extremists, and selfish "elite" landowners who want to prevent Joe Sixpack from getting a minimum wage job at Disneyland east. Those who shape what passes for right-wing opinion in America lacked the imagination to picture conservatives opposing the creation of the Disney octopus, one that would probably have (and may yet) spread its spin-off limbs all around, threatening the area's battlefield sites and the tranquillity and sense of community in the local small towns.

The *Washington Times* scoffed at the contention that the places where our forebears shed their blood during the Civil War might be sacred and, therefore, not for buying and selling; it mocked the opposition in tones reminiscent of the Bolshevik ideologues' contemptuous assessment of the Russian people and their history: "It can't be in Virginia," the editorial page sneered, "not where Civil War horse droppings might have fallen. Or where Ken Burns might stumble across chicken bones from some century-old repast." Horse droppings? Chicken bones? By these words, the Washington mouthpiece of the official conservative movement revealed the contempt felt by Wall Street Republicans for the people, culture, and yes, the *land* that is America.

The official right is intent on force-feeding us its ideological hemlock, the tasty poison that first numbs our individual brains, producing a false sense of well-being in the citizenry, and then dispatches the corporate body. James Howard Kunstler's *The Geography of Nowhere* describes the transformation of much of the American middle class into what I call People From Nowhere, that peculiar version of nomadic mass man that the consumer-commuter culture breeds, one of the variations of 20th-century rootlessness: "Through the postwar decades Americans happily allowed their towns to be destroyed. They would flock to Disneyland at Anaheim, or later to Disney World in Florida, and walk down Main Street, and think, *gee, it feels good here*. Then they'd go back home and tear down half the old buildings downtown and pave them over for parking lots, throw a parade to celebrate a new K-Mart opening—even when it put ten local merchants out of business—[and] turn Elm Street into a six-lane cross-town expressway. . . .They'd do every fool thing possible to destroy good existing relationships between things in their towns, and put their local economics at the mercy of distant corporations whose officers didn't give a damn about whether these towns lived or died. And then, when vacation time rolled around, they'd flock back to Disney World to feel good about America." For now, Virginia's Disney battle has subsided, but you can bet that the development-at-all-costs crowd will be back.

In any case, real Virginians count for less and less in the political and social struggles that are determining the future of the Old Dominion. The demographers tell us that just over half the current population of the state is native; that the suburban counties surrounding the Imperial capital across the Potomac, populated largely by transient white cosmopolitans, pride themselves on hating their WASP roots; and that a U.N.-lover's "mosaic" of Sikhs, Central Americans, and assorted wetbacks constitute an urban tail that wags the rural body of the Virginia dog. Chuck Robb's recent reelection to the Senate was, in part, the result of the urbanized and heavily populated counties around Washington outgunning the rural pro-Oliver North vote. The fact that people with roots here are being displaced by aliens, both domestic and foreign, and that the predominance of aliens is driven by the urbanization of the state, is reason enough to oppose further "economic development."

The rootlessness and alienation that are so often the byproducts of unrestrained development are not, however, evident only in the capitalist West. Valentin Rasputin's novella *The Fire* tells the story of Ivan Petrovitch, a former inhabitant of an ancient Siberian village who has been forced to move to a newly developed logging town because his old village has been flooded. Over the years the old village's inhabitants are overwhelmed by an influx of deracinated migrant workers. These Soviet People From Nowhere have few of the residual feelings of place that the old-timers have, and one night, when the town's main warehouse catches fire, Ivan Petrovitch catches a glimpse into modernity's heart of darkness as the migrants and, finally, some of the town's old-timers forgo at-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tempting to put out the fire and indulge in an orgy of drunken looting.

Given the Soviet state's initial efforts to destroy Russian identity and the immeasurable damage done to the Russian landscape by forced industrialization and collectivization, it is not surprising that environmentalist, conservationist, and preservationist efforts became an important part of the program of the nationalist dissident movement that emerged in the 1960's. In the public arena, Rasputin was a prominent member of the school of so-called "village writers" who celebrated the authentic community of the precollectivized village and the majesty of the natural world, and who loved the *Rodina*, one's native land, the feminine Motherland (in Rasputin's case, Siberia), as an integral and indispensable part of loyalty to the *Otechestvo*, the Russian Fatherland. In Russia, it is the nationalist right that has protected and preserved the national patrimony, for what could patriotism be without respect and care for the soil of the *Rodina*? How could a national consciousness exist without the preservation of the national monuments, churches, and Kremlins of the *Otechestvo*?

As of late, Rasputin, along with a number of former nationalist dissidents, entered the ranks of the "irreconcilable opposition," where nationalists of every stripe have joined forces with the neo-communists in an all-out political war against the Westernizing "democrats," many of whom would like to install what the American official right has dubbed "democratic capitalism." The nationalists call this capitalization process the "Snickersization" of Russia, a process whose symbols are the ubiquitous Snickers bar (seemingly available at every Moscow street vendor's kiosk), the Russian edition of *Penthouse*, and McDonald's Golden Arches, which even now are looming over the statue of Russia's most revered poet on Moscow's Pushkin Square.

I cannot and will not attempt to justify Rasputin and company's embrace of their country's former destroyers. The repulsive ideology of the "red-browns," some of whom probably took part in the persecution of their now staunch allies, seems inconsistent, to say the least, with the anticommunism that Rasputin and company formerly espoused. At least the nationalists can take comfort in the patriotic rhetoric that has made its way into the speeches of their former adversaries. Still, when the "Snickersization" they so strongly object to is taken into account, one can grasp the fundamental motives of men who now say "better the communists than the democrats."

I doubt that James Howard Kunstler, a frequent contributor to the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* and a former editor of *Rolling Stone*, is now or has ever been a conservative. I myself have frequently turned up in the company of granola crunchers and baby seal fetishists during some of our area's preservation wars. I hope some of my Republican friends will understand why I say "better the Greens than the Republicans." Better the Earth Shoe and the Volvo crowd than the Gucci and Mercedes set when it comes to saving what is left of the American landscape. Better the Woodstock leftovers than the Wall Street turncoats.

I will never again count myself among the "conservatives" who would destroy ground made sacred by the blood of the Blue and Gray warriors who are my ancestors. I will never again tolerate the whining of those who liken the Manassas battlefield to a mere pasture for fossilized horse dung, or the remains and artifacts of unknown soldiers to so many chicken scraps. I will never again let them tell me that I'm Standing in the Way of Progress and ask if I want to Take Us Back to the Horse and Buggy Days. For what they really mean is that they don't care about America or Americans, that the first Allensworth to turn over a furrow on an 18th-century Virginia farm worked and strived solely for himself, without a care for his kin or country, that my kinsmen whose body parts decorated the American landscape during the War Between the States were suckers who fought for nothing, and that the gaggle of globalist freebooters who helped to send later generations to such charming spots as Omaha Beach and Saigon were just spouting so much bilge when they talked about honor, duty, and patriotism.

I want my children, and their children, to be able to look out across the fields of northern Virginia and picture their ancestors working behind the plow. I want them to be able to stand on the stone bridge at Manassas and picture the ebb and flow of that battle. I want them to feel real affection for their native land and for the lakes, rivers, streams, and forests where their grandfathers hunted and fished and where, God willing, they can do the same. They will not be People From Nowhere, either the consumerist clodhoppers of Kunstler or the besotted hooligans of Rasputin. I want them to know that they belong to their home country, to a particular place that will still be recognizable as such in a hundred years, and I want them to know that they belong to something bigger as well, to America.

Wayne Allensworth writes from Purcellville, Virginia.

Amazing Discovery:

Baptists, Fundamentalists, and Orthodox Jews are right: The Bible is literal truth. The world was created, fossils and all, in 7 days.

HOW? He made it out of 3-D Fractals. In the beginning was the Word. 3-D Fractals are the visible echoes. They make all we see.

WHY? Catholics are right. We have free will. So, Creation had to be made in such a way that we couldn't tell if He made it.

CRATS! explains it. And tells us where we come from. For instance, Caucasians are from the Caucasus Mountains. How'd they get there? They were the 10 northern tribes of Israel. We're descended from them.

If you think *you're* tired of excessive government, wait 'til you see what the field beasts (taxpayers) do about it in .....

CRATS!

an Adams book.

To order call: **1-800-OLD-DRUM** VISA/MC accepted
Or send a check for **$9.95**; Two copies, $18.00 to:
Old Drum Publishing, Box 401, Portersville, PA 16051.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POETRY

Erato in the Throes

by Ralph de Toledano

"The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay. . . . Our religion . . . has attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea is the fact. The strongest part of our religion today is its unconscious poetry."

So wrote Matthew Arnold in 1880. But would he say the same today? Would he still argue that the "fact" of religion is failing, when religion stubbornly refuses to disappear, from Russia to Main Street? And would he see a "future" in poetry, as a substitute for religion, at a time when it is increasingly banished from the life of the young, carried by poets nobody reads—"laureate" though they may be—and nothing but products of racial ego and the vapidity of the Library of Congress? The poets of our time are perhaps as competent as those of Matthew Arnold's time, but in a very real sense they are irrelevant.

Struggle though she may, Erato has become a nonperson. Ezra Pound, in his *The ABC of Reading*, noted that music loses its validity if it departs too far from the dance. And so poetry must maintain its connection with the other arts if it is to survive. But those other arts and letters, which once gave us a parallel understanding of three meters of life, are rapidly vanishing, and even those approximations of verse which grew in Tin Pan Alley have been replaced by the illiterate abominations of rap. Where today are the *pomes pennyeach* which sought to bring refinement to seeking minds? Peter Minot once repeated that today's newspaper is tomorrow's garbage-pail liner—but the newspaper, however fumblingly, at least reaches out to man's immortal preoccupations.

The "little" magazines are still here, but they are inverted witnesses. Where once these magazines stirred their larger contemporaries long ago, the current crop live in a small world supported fitfully by the National Endowment for the Arts, and pursue ends and means of little concern to all but a coteric that turns the pages in search of its own product. But recall the high excitement over the publication of the Imagist manifesto back when, and Amy Lowell and her cigars. I was a boy, reading everything I could find in local public libraries now dedicated to the latest expression of literary autoeroticism—and it was a good one on New York City's West 115th Street, some five blocks from where we lived. We had good public libraries then, with librarians who knew more than how to stamp your card or fine you for overdue books, and with six library cards in my family, the weekly Friday evening visit netted us 24 books to carry us through the week—and these included a sampling of poetry in three languages.

That was in the great 1920's and 1930's, before it became an article of faith that only economics mattered. The nonperson status of today's poet derives from his loss of function—something for which he and our cultural castration are to blame. The poem is an equation. No matter how rich the variables, it adds up to nothing if one factor is zero. Mark Van Doren may have been positing that point when he used to tell his classes at Columbia that the measure of a poet could be taken by the number of lines that are quoted from his *opera*. He had something else in mind—and dumped heavily on students who challenged his thesis—but truth sometimes squeezes through the interstices of thinking to show itself plain. That the lines are quoted means that the lines have been read and have entered the general consciousness. The equation is completed and poetry exists.

But what will the critics of the future, when they make an assessment of our time, be forced to focus on? What poet writing after the 1920's is the subject of the quoted lispings of prep school and college students? The National Endowment for the Arts gives out a grant here and a grant there, mostly to untenured "poets" teaching freshmen—and only if the "poets" are politically correct and have the right connections. But who has read their works, even if they become poets laureate and read their doggerel at presidential inaugurations? They are "makers"—the Greek root of the word poetry—only in the sense that they have put words down on paper. But are they the "legislators" that Plato apperceived, when not even the legislators of our time, having provided the cash for their grants, share any cognizance of their work? They have not been allowed to make a scratch, much less a mark, on time, though some may eventually make the ranks of poetasters.

T.S. Eliot argued that poetry is a form of concealment—like the return of Odysseus to Penelope, in which the discovery of his identity is left to Euryclea, a humble serving woman. But his concealment, as I used to tell my father when he quoted the verses of Victor Hugo to me in rebuttal of what he considered the obscurantism of my own adolescent product, is a form of revelation, and the argument goes more to the methodology than to any *apologia* for the vacuum in which poetry huddles today. It is easy enough to recall that Wallace Stevens' *Harmonium* sold only 200 copies in the ten years that followed its appearance, or that the first books of verse by T.S. Eliot and e.e. cummings—as well as those of others less celebrated—were published only because friends or the poets themselves financed publication. That John Berryman was perhaps more fortunate may be a function of his determination, when we were undergraduates together, to be known even if he was not heard—and at least one brilliant poet of our undergraduate years publishes in Europe to great silence.

The fact is that the poems of Eliot and cummings *were* published, that a great critical mind like Ezra Pound's could work over *The Waste Land* and then force the media and academic min-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

istries of culture to take note. However few copies were sold of these germinal works, they were reviewed and discussed, making their impact on literary discourse and the literary consciousness of their time. No writer after that could ignore Eliot or Stevens or Conrad Aiken—or even Floyd Dell's hijinks in issuing a satirical manifesto. They were injected into the bloodstream of contemporary literature, were part of the cultural *zeitgeist*. Publication at the time of the equivalent of Jimmy Carter's maunderings would have been treated with the same scorn as a new volume of inspirational verses by Edgar Guest—pulp poetry and little more, with the publicity value of a painter who held the brush between his toes.

A publisher who took himself more seriously than a literary bookie published verse, as a professional imperative. Serious magazines published verse, and as late as the 1950's and 1960's, it could be read in publications such as *Commentary* or *Modern Age*, and even *National Review* found room for more than light verse. The literary supplements did not consider reviews of poetry a waste of space or journalistic condescension. Once upon a time, too, poetry was read and memorized in grammar and secondary schools—and poets were not looked upon as creators of an esoteric *graffiti*. Now, one by one the "intellectual" magazines are eliminating verse from their fare, or using it as filler. Book publishers—many of them competing against breakfast cereals as units of corporate conglomerates—grunt that "poetry doesn't sell" or is irrelevant in an age which moves from technology to technology and computer to computer. So the writing of verse, even when it sees print, becomes a response to an itch, or an obscure passion like Nero Wolfe's cultivation of orchids. Booksellers respond by relegating verse to a shelf south of the greeting cards. And the National Endowment for the Arts, when it is not too busy rewarding homophilic and urinary photography, operates as a WPA for unemployed writers.

In the years that followed the 1912 renascence, America not only began evolving a new and important voice, but seized the initiative from the British. There were pitifully few other poetic voices in the world—Garcia Lorca, Antonio Machado, and Miguel de Unamuno in Spain, Rilke in Germany, and perhaps Osip Mandelstam in Russia. The British hesitatingly gave us Wystan Auden, and the French some interesting voices from the post-World War II Montmartre. The death of Theodore Roethke, however, was a *requiem*, for what other serious voices had been heard? Erica Jong? There were of course others—Roethke was not alone—but they were unknown to the literary world of getting and spending. The receivership of the poetic impulse by academic minnesingers and a bored critical fraternity meant paralysis of the poetic larynx.

It is not necessary to flaunt Shelley's overblown dictum that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world" in order to fear for the human psyche. At best, poetry has given us an *explication de texte* of man's inner nature and the regurgitations of his soul. But the "immense" future foreseen by Matthew Arnold and its role as an adjunct to religion are no more—perhaps because religion has increasingly become an adjunct to a social dialectic. It has gone, and the going has been a symptom of the politicization of art and of a "humanist" *Weltanschauung*. Instead we have seen the triumph of Macaulay's view of poetry as the trauma of unsound minds, and the imposition of the ego on the id.

Poetry is a dissident yet ordering impulse. But at a time when "dissidence" has grown establishmentarian, poetry seems irrelevant, or at best an anguished effluent, Matthew Arnold notwithstanding. Or can it be that poetry flourishes and is an accepted part of the culture only during the vigor and expansion of a nation or a society—Elizabethan England and turn-of-the-century America, for example, or a Spain which gave us Cervantes and then flatted like a *vox humana*. If this is the answer, then the prognosis of poetry is indeed gloomy. The surrogate of progress, of growth, is tradition—and the Western world's traditions have for long been exiled to an intellectual Gulag Archipelago or done away with in political and academic shredders. Harvard, Princeton, Columbia—and Oxford and Cambridge, too—once shook with life, as they now scratch for fleas. The poet is the spiritual product of a surging materialism, not of a society which sees its economic libido as criminal.

The poet will, of course, continue to sing—much as beshawled old women once prayed in Russian churches—but his voice will echo in a cistern like that of John the Baptist. The poet has been rejected by our civilization, because that civilization is no longer at ease with itself and spends its time rubbing camphor on a rheumy chest, while it contemplates its navel. A society in twilight seems to seek darkness, not the poet's scolding or his Jeremiads. As the poet's song becomes a mutter, what emerges from his throat is the lonely and ignored keening of Cassandra.

Poor poetry. Poor Matthew Arnold.

Ralph de Toledano is the author, most recently, of The Apocrypha of Limbo, *a book of religious poems.*

EDUCATION

Student Reports on the Perverse and Political

University of Michigan

by Aaron Steelman

Nowhere is the right of free expression more hotly debated than on our nation's campuses. The recent controversy at my school, the University of Michigan, is a prime example. On January 9, U-M sophomore "Jake Baker"—a/k/a Abraham Jacob Alkhabaz, a 21-year-old Kuwaiti-American who uses his mother's maiden name—did what he often did: he signed onto the Internet, the international computer network. Actually, Baker signed onto *alt.sex.stories*, an Internet newsgroup for pornography of all types. He had often written pornographic fantasies on the newsgroup before, and in all of his stories Baker used fictional names for his characters—except for the story that he composed that Monday. It seems that Baker, ironically a linguistics major, was unable to think of a fictional name and so used the name of a fellow university student for one of his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

characters—a character who was to be tied by her hair to a ceiling fan, tortured, mutilated, sodomized with a hot curling iron, and eventually killed in the story. As for why he chose the name of this particular girl, with whom he shared a Japanese class the previous term, Baker has only stated, "because she was an attractive young woman and I needed a name for the story I was writing."

The story, entitled "Pamela's Ordeal," which even Baker admitted was "sick stuff," drew little fanfare until a University of Michigan alumnus in Moscow saw the story and contacted university officials on January 19. The following day, Department of Public Safety (DPS) officers questioned Baker about the transmission, and he admitted, after waiving his Miranda rights, to writing and posting the story. On January 23, Baker was interviewed at University Hospitals in an attempt to evaluate his mental state. Following the interview, a letter was sent to the Vice President for Student Affairs, Maureen A. Hartford, which stated that Baker's status at the university should be restricted. Yet, as one of Baker's attorneys, David Cahill, pointed out, "They didn't ask that he be suspended." Nevertheless, as Baker left his 9:00 A.M. class on Thursday, February 2, he was taken into custody by three DPS officers and notified that he had been suspended indefinitely by University President James J. Duderstadt.

Duderstadt was able to suspend Baker by invoking his powers under Regent's Bylaw 2.01, which gives the president the power to maintain "health, diligence, and order among the students." As is customary with students suspended under this bylaw, a hearing was scheduled to determine the guilt of the accused, in this case for February 9. On that day, however, Baker was arrested by FBI agents and taken to a U.S. District Court in Detroit, where he was charged with one count of interstate transmission of a threat to injure or kidnap another person. He was then held without bond in a Wayne County jail; pleaded innocent in court on February 17; and was moved to the federal prison in Milan, Michigan, on February 23. He was finally released on March 10, after posting a $10,000 recognizance bond. Baker's attorneys were confident that the entire case against their client would eventually be thrown out. As one of them, Douglas Mullkoff, said: "I don't think this case will go to trial."

The reason for the federal charge stems from the fact that not only did Baker use the name of a real person in his story, but he had also exchanged "threatening" e-mail messages with a man in Ontario named Arthur Gronda. In the correspondence between Baker and Gronda, which was found in Baker's dormitory room by DPS officers, the two men discussed plans of torture, rape, and murder. Indeed, in one message Baker stated, "just thinking about it anymore doesn't do the trick. I need to DO IT." And in another, he wrote, "I have come upon an excellent method to abduct a bitch." Gronda responded to one of Baker's messages by writing, "I have been out tonight and I can tell you that I am thinking more about 'doing' a girl. I can picture it so well . . . and I can think of no better use for their flesh. I HAVE to make a bitch suffer!" Also confiscated by DPS officers was an unfinished story of Baker's, in which he wrote: "I plan it well. It will be my first kidnapping, my first real rape of a pretty young girl. My first experimentation with all of the devices of pain I had thought up before. I obsessed about my target more than any other girl on campus."

Judge Thomas A. Carlson, who presided over Baker's detention hearing, stated that the messages discovered by DPS officers were of prime importance in the court's decision to charge Baker. "If we only had a story of rape and torture, we would have the issue of the First Amendment here," Carlson said. "But there are at least two additional elements to the case. Mr. Baker named an individual at the U-M as a subject of his story and had a discussion with another person about where and how an assault could be carried out. This is more than just writing a story." On the strength of this evidence, the one federal charge against Baker was changed to five counts of threat to kidnap; "Gronda," which police believe to be a pseudonym for a man still at large, has been indicted as a codefendant in three of the charges. The federal case against Baker was slated to go to trial on May 22.

As for reaction to the Baker case on campus, opinion was mixed. Though Baker's story was roundly denounced as gruesome and sick, many people were concerned by the treatment he received from the university as well as the federal government. The Student Civil Liberties Watch (SCLW), a student group unaffiliated with the ACLU, stated in a press release that it "denounces the actions of both the University of Michigan and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. [T]he SCLW affirms that in order to reserve our liberties, we must often defend reprehensible choices made by individuals with questionable judgment exercising those rights."

The Michigan Review, an independent student publication, took a similar stand. As it stated in a March editorial: "After considering in detail what Baker wrote in his stories, one may contend that what Baker did is, in fact, criminal. . . . Nevertheless, even if one determines that this argument does have merit, it still does not justify the decision of Duderstadt to suspend Baker. If one faces criminal charges, as does Baker, one has a right to trial by a jury of one's peers, as guaranteed by the Sixth Amendment. Additionally, one is innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt—a long-standing aspect of American jurisprudence. By acting to suspend Baker immediately, Duderstadt, the president of a public university, circumvented these standards in the legal process. In this sense, Baker did not receive his right to due process under law."

Michael Paul Goldenberg, a graduate student, voiced a similar opinion in a letter to *The Michigan Daily*, the other major campus publication. Goldenberg stated, "Without debating the wisdom or taste exercised in making his internet entry, I suggest that neither foolishness nor vulgar taste are crimes; that Mr. Baker has not received due process under the code because the administration panicked, and that his case highlights exactly why we need a university run by the laws and constitutions of Michigan and the United States."

The Michigan Daily officially offered a different point of view: "While the technical questions remain about the process, it is now clear that suspending Baker was a prudent decision. Baker's messages are indicative of a dangerous person. In naming a specific individual as his target, detailing how he would harm that person, and having access to that person, Baker gave Duderstadt ample reason for quick action. Duderstadt acted correctly in suspending Baker."

Yet the harshest criticism of Baker emanated not from his fellow students but from the participants in the very forum in which Baker posted his story. Indeed, Baker has been a target of attacks in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more than one subsequent tale posted on *alt.sex.stories*. A California woman named Tanith Tyrr, who claims to be a professional "adult writer," even detailed the gunpoint abduction of a man she calls "Joe Baker." Tyrr has Baker tortured and eventually killed.

The female student named in Baker's story has declined, as we go to press, to comment on the controversy.

Columbia University

by Tom Woods

Most of us recognize that cries for "tolerance" have become the left's weapon of choice in its erosion of those few civilized norms that remain in American life. The image the left likes to conjure up is that of an ignorant band of rednecks sadistically persecuting homosexuals or other minorities, when the truth is that most ordinary Americans would be satisfied simply to go through life without having condoms thrown at them or their children.

In such an atmosphere, the only absolute truth becomes tolerance itself. Exasperated, a few friends of mine, curious to test the umbrella of tolerance, formed an organization last year called Students at Harvard Erotically Engaged with Pets (SHEEP). Its "coming out" letter to the *Harvard Crimson*, later reprinted in *First Things* and the *Rothbard-Rockwell Report*, decried the discrimination and opprobrium to which practitioners of bestiality have historically been subjected "because we refuse to form relationships according to socially constructed categories such as 'species.'"

The problem, of course, is that these movements are impossible to parody, for no sooner have you come up with a clever satire than the lefties have begun to advocate seriously the very idea you proposed in jest. As Murray Rothbard observed, we employ *reductio ad absurdum* with such people at our peril, since they tend to be all too willing to embrace the *absurdum*.

No, a student group advocating bestiality has not been formed (yet), but it can scarcely be far away. The *New York Post* and the *Washington Times*, which tend to have a keen eye for these things, quickly latched on a few months ago to a breaking story at my place of graduate study, Columbia University—the formation of a student organization called Conversio Virium (CV), a group devoted to the discussion of bondage, domination, and sadomasochism.

Now even without this development, Columbia University, with no right-wing student newspaper, no sympathetic professors, and with a guide to New York listing no fewer than 16 homosexual or AIDS-related groups but not a single church, already ranks among the most inhospitable environments for a normal person. But this episode added a whole new dimension to an already less-than-ideal situation.

Mercifully, a coalition of campus religious organizations recently succeeded in repealing the group's recognized status by a vote of 18-15, but at the Pyrrhic price of recognizing this group of misfits as worthy of any discussion at all. Not surprisingly, respectable campus opinion was unanimous in condemning the group's expulsion as the worst human rights violation since the turning away of HIV-positive immigrants, and pledged to appeal the decision. One CV member vowed to remain on a liquid-only diet until the organization has received a formal apology from its persecutors and been fully reinstated.

Several days later, *Modern Times*, Columbia's "progressive newspaper," published a front-page story condemning the head of the religious coalition for displaying "genuine hatred and intolerance" for those who do not subscribe to her "strict moral code." Even worse, of course, was the "not-so-thinly-veiled homophobia" that permeated the expulsion effort. For its part, the *Columbia Daily Spectator* detected the mailed fist of fascism behind the vote to expel, a gesture which in its view "violated the rights of every student at Columbia." Can't give up that fundamental right to engage in acts of torture on someone else's property.

"There is, indeed, a higher law than the Earl Hall constitution," the *Spectator* solemnly intoned, referring to the document that allows for such expulsions. The meaning here is unclear, but it's a good bet that the reference is not to the natural law, the old-fashioned view that a qualitative difference exists between man and beast, and thus between the actions appropriate to each. When Fallen Man is made the measure of all things, as the left would have it, strange and horrific consequences inevitably follow. "What a contemptible thing is man," wrote Seneca, "if he fails to rise above the human condition!"

University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee

by Michael Kent

At the heart of the most recent political correctness controversy at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, where I am a graduate student, is the proposed "Great Books Certificate Program." The program, first presented to the Course and Curriculum Committee last November, is the brainchild of a group of 23 professors headed by Dr. David Mulroy of the Department of Classics and Hebrew Studies. The goal of the program is "to provide guidance to students seeking a rigorous liberal arts education. It provides an incentive for such students to select courses that traditionally compose the nucleus of a liberal arts education and are still considered especially valuable by a large number of faculty members, i.e., courses in foreign language, mathematics, the history of Western civilization, and in the great books, i.e., original works widely regarded to be of fundamental importance within various disciplines." Other certificate programs exist for students completing a voluntary regimen of courses dealing with various racial and ethnic minorities.

While "Great Books" programs like this one were once common in the liberal arts, many faculty members at UWM see no merit in them. This view manifested itself in the three-to-two vote against recommending the program to the Associate Dean's Office for approval. Predictably, a key point of contention, in the words of Professor Campbell Tatham of the English Department, was the "problematic" nature of the whole notion of "great books." Professor Joyce Kirk of the History department complained that the program was "too Western."

Fortunately for the students, the issue attracted the notice of the student press as well as the *Milwaukee Sentinel*. *Sentinel* staff writer Dave Tianen listed among his "Top Ten reasons why Great Books classes do not belong at UWM": because they "soak up valuable class-

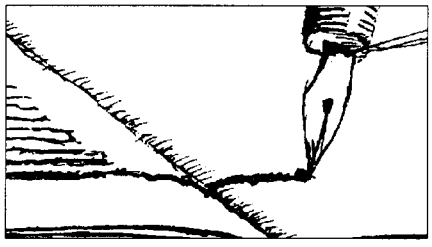
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

room space needed for teaching Klingon" and because "all those old dudes like Shakespeare and Chaucer talk funny." In the typical fashion in which such snafus are handled, the Course and Curriculum Committee determined that the vote was invalid due to the lack of a quorum and was scheduled for reconsideration in December.

On December 5, each side took its case before the full committee. The opponents of the measure, now led by Professor Gregory Jay of the English and Comparative Literature department, submitted a statement endorsed by 19 faculty members, 11 of whom were associated with the English department. In that statement, Professor Jay identified three principal criticisms of the proposal: one, the nature of "greatness"; two, the proposal did nothing to assure that the program would not focus exclusively on "Western Civilization"; three, the overlap with another proposal offering an alternative liberal arts degree featuring "more diversity in subject matter" and "not based on the debatable category of 'greatness.'" Among Professor Jay's specific concerns were the possible exclusion of books by "women and people of color" and the lack of a requirement that "develops the student's knowledge of non-European history, civilization, or 'great books.'"

Proponents of the program responded that as recently as 1991 the English department offered such courses as "Great English Writers: The Anglo-Saxons Through the 18th Century" and "Great American Writers: Colonial Times Through the 19th Century." Proponents also argued that the Western Civilization requirement was based on the fact that the "history of the so-called Western world is uniquely well documented. There is no comparable set of records to put in their place." Of course, this argument cuts two ways: If Chinese or Korean history were better documented, should UWM students perhaps concentrate on "Eastern Civilization"?

One of the individuals who came out in favor of the program was instructor John Boatman of the American Indian Studies and Ethnic Studies Certificate Program. In a letter to the Course and Curriculum Committee, Mr. Boatman stated, "Although I support [and teach courses which satisfy the requirement for] 'Cultural Diversity,' I also believe that it is essential that our students are presented with ample opportunities to be educated in such intellectual arenas as that which would be available through the 'Great Books' Certificate Program and the related 'Great Books' Seminar course."



On February 14, the faculty committee sponsoring the Great Books program responded to its critics. In an 11-page memo to the curriculum committee, David Mulroy defended the decision to use the term "great," addressed the perceived "Western bias," and clarified the differences between the "Great Books" program and a complimentary "Alternative Program in Liberal Learning." As a result of the memo, the Curriculum Committee voted 8-4 to approve the program.

Critics of the program have not given up, however. Having passed the curriculum committee, the program must now be approved at a general faculty meeting on April 19. Opponents of the program have already begun an aggressive campaign to pack the meeting with their ideological soulmates. Supporters, too, have begun rallying their troops, and the most heated debate is probably yet to come. Although faculty meetings are typically attended by fewer than a dozen individuals, the meeting on April 19 was expected to draw well over a hundred angry professors. It is a telling sign of our times when the most fervid debate on a college campus is whether to support the teaching of our civilization's greatest works.

Elizabethtown College

by Timothy Richardson

Elizabethtown College, the liberal arts school which I attend, now has both a radical feminist group called Womenspeak and a homosexual advocacy group called Allies, the latter, of course, filled with sympathetic heterosexuals, primarily women. One would think that a small private school of 1,400 students in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, could insulate itself from the rampant political correctness plaguing larger and more prominent institutions of learning. But this hope ignores the all-pervasiveness of the academic left, and the government which empowers it. In response to the emergence of Allies, I co-founded the Campus Community for American Unity, a small organization of highly motivated young conservatives dedicated to preserving America's moral and cultural heritage.

The CCAU criticized the Student Senate for lavishing on the Allies a budget that exceeded the funds granted to other extracurricular organizations, and even academic clubs. Since then we have been attacked for failing to do the "American thing," meaning accept homosexuality as an "alternative lifestyle." If campuses are supposed to be forums for the free discussion of ideas, why was the CCAU's objection written off as the mean-spirited rantings of a small number of homophobes? Clearly, what the left really wants is not tolerance and diversity, but thought control and a constriction of free speech.

We do not question the right of the Allies to make a case for homosexuality, but we do believe that the obvious disparity in the allocation of student funds points to larger problems here and elsewhere. Our communities, states, and school administrations are now controlled by federal grants and the *fear* of violating federal guidelines. Elizabethtown College, for example, under significant pressure to attract more minorities (who comprise a very small percentage of the student body), now has a full tuition grant available to racial minorities, in order to increase "diversity" on campus, something few people here seem to mind. Our campus eagerly accepts the situation; by being "diversified" the college will qualify for more federal aid and remain accredited by a federally certified agency.

The CCAU is trying to remind the students of Elizabethtown College of our moral, cultural, and historical traditions. We have invited speakers like Samuel Francis to address us on campus; purchased literature sympathetic to our concerns for the college library; and will continue to fight against such Allies-sponsored events as the National Coming Out Day and for the return of our school to the business of scholarship, away from politics and the cause *du jour*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RELIGION

Descent into the Episcopal Church

by The Rev. Fr. Gene Geromel

Effective January 1, 1994, the right Reverend Clarence Pope, Episcopal Bishop of Fort Worth, not only retired but left the Episcopal Church for Rome. He is the highest-ranking Episcopalian to leave the denomination. Bishop Pope was one of a handful of bishops willing to stand against a liberal hierarchy. As is true of many Episcopalians, he saw the church he knew and loved change its core beliefs in a quest to follow a left-wing agenda. And he is not alone. A majority of members of another parish transferred to the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese.

For years the Episcopal Church was known as the Republican Party at prayer. Its members were perceived to be part of the powerful elite, the rich and the famous. Whether this perception was ever true, it certainly is no longer accurate today. Yes, some members may be rich, powerful, and even famous. Some may even be Republicans. But not her leadership. The "Sandinistas in Sensitivity Groups," "Marxists at EST," "Nihilists in Nirvana," but never the Republican Party at prayer. For the last two decades, the gospel of the 60's has prevailed, and for the institution and those parishioners who remain, the cost has been financial ruin, moral bankruptcy, and intolerance. Even more frightening for me is the fact that every time I watch an interview of the President, or one of his deputies, I feel as if I am sitting at a diocesan meeting. Shades of an age of demonstrations, SDS, and free love. If you wonder where the age of Clinton will take us, just look at the Episcopal Church.

During the Reagan years, the clergy of my diocese received a letter. It was a tirade against Reaganomics, under which the poor suffered unendurable hardships, welfare mothers were ignored, and unemployment was rampant. In it, our Bishop commiserated with us over how difficult it must now be to afford a vacation. In the final paragraph, he told us all about his extended vacation in Switzerland.

In the entranceway to the diocesan office, a large sign lamented that the average welfare mother was only given 25 cents per meal per person by the government. At that point in my life, our family was spending an average of 11 cents per person per meal. The priest who came with me spent even less than that per meal. At that time, my children qualified for free lunches at school. While Reagan was portrayed by the bishop as the great Satan of those on welfare, no mention was ever made of the standard of living of his own priests! The welfare of priests was not part of the agenda.

Today, one of the great concerns of our President and his Lady is health care. Some 37 million (or 58 million, depending on the source) are without it, we are told. The rest of us are condemned to pay for those without. More importantly, our standard of care will be lessened, if not destroyed. Yet, like the vacationing bishop, Clinton and Congress shall never be forced to live with the same system.

"Limousine Bishops" speak eloquently about the suffering of the poor, demand redress for perceived wrongs, yet live in the best neighborhoods, travel to the nicest places, and attend the hottest parties. It is reported that the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church makes nearly as much money as the President of the United States. (His office refuses to divulge any information on his salary—yet a published report contends that it is $166,000 with a housing allowance of $48,000, making him the highest paid leader of any mainline church. It is reported that his retirement pay will be $132,000.) The median budget for a parish in the Diocese of Michigan is $86,000. The median income including housing for 1992 of Episcopal Clergy in the United States was $38,750. This is not to say that there aren't fine bishops who are paid a pittance. There is, however, a direct relationship between salary and "advocacy of the poor" (as long as they fit the politically correct definition). Little concern is expressed for the soldiers who need Food Stamps to feed their families.

Conferences are frequently held on ministering to the poor. If one were to close his eyes, one could imagine hearing the very same exhortations at any liberal think-tank. A fellow priest attended one such conference. All day he heard how one must be sensitive to the poor and oppressed. He endured the guilt trip of being white and middle-class. At the end of the day, he drove home tired and depressed in his ten-year-old Toyota. He was passed by both "facilitators," each driving his own Mercedes. It is not only liberal politicians whose lifestyle belies their words. The church too has its poverty pimps.

For decades, if not since the founding of this nation, the Episcopal Church had a special relationship with the military. From his years as a cadet or midshipman until retirement, an officer could be ministered to by an Episcopal Chaplain. Those who opposed the war in Vietnam have since risen to prominence in the Episcopal Church. One former officer, now a parish priest, tells the story of one less-than-pleasant demonstration in Okinawa. One of the demonstrators was the then Bishop of Okinawa, who is now the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. During the Gulf War, an Episcopal President sought comfort and spiritual direction from *Billy Graham*. His own Presiding Bishop denounced his "imperialism." A recent conference in Detroit was entitled "Making the Connections Between U.S. Militarism and Urban Violence."

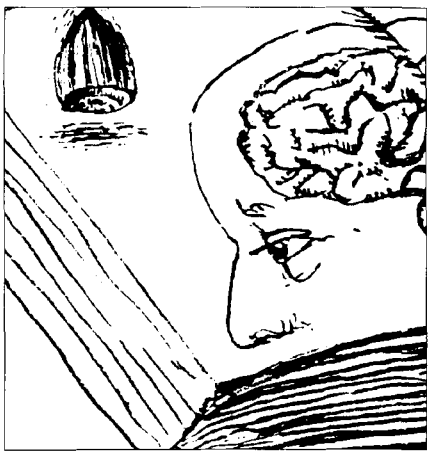
The agenda of the Episcopal hierarchy seems little concerned with the spiritual well-being of servicemen and women. It is no secret that words such as "souls," "eternal salvation," and "holiness" are absent from the lexicon of liberal clergy. While Episcopal elites snub their noses at the military, numerous news sources report that First Daughter Chelsea refused to enter a military vehicle that was to take her to school, saying: "My mother and father don't like the military."

The military (for the Episcopal left and apparently for our President) is merely a laboratory for social experimentation. The only time they take an interest in the well-being of soldiers is when they have the opportunity to speak of "gender-neutral" policies, or of the admittance, retention, and promotion of gays. The same Presiding Bishop who condemned the Gulf War applauded the Democratic President's initial policy toward gays, sending a memo to Episcopal Chaplains encouraging them to support

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and promote the new policy. All this despite the fact that Scripture, tradition, and even the canons of the Episcopal Church are *not* value-neutral on the subject of homosexual behavior. It is a sin. Individual sin, however, is not part of their vocabulary (although "corporate sin" is a popular term).

One cannot help but wonder if we are not still experiencing echoes of the Chicago Convention when police officers were "pigs" and soldiers were "killers." How does one minister to those whom one holds in contempt? Likewise, how does a President command a military that he abhors?



Nowhere is the agenda so focused as on the issues of feminism and homosexual rights. Opponents are removed and silenced whenever possible. They are excluded from positions of power, denied ordination, and actively harassed. There are even documentable cases of attempts to blackmail priests into silence on these issues. This in a church that presents itself as inclusive and diverse!

It began with the ordination of women. The Episcopal Church has held itself up to be a member of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. In the early 70's, pressure began to mount to ordain women priests. The other branches of the Catholic Church begged us not to break with tradition. For those in favor, it was a matter of principle, of equal rights, of theology. At a debate on the issue in Philadelphia, a rather scholarly priest argued that Scripture and the traditions of the church were against ordaining women. His opponent, who was later elected the first female "bishop" in the church, stated: "All that Father says is true. However, it doesn't matter." Only the agenda mattered.

Yet, the truth is that it is a fundamental change in the theology of the church. If anyone believes otherwise let him read the book *Ungodly Rage*. A recent press report reproduced part of a prayer developed at a "feminist" meeting. The Sophia prayer, developed by feminists, reads: "Our maker Sophia, we are women in your image. . . . With the hot blood of our wombs we give form to new life. . . . With nectar between our thighs we invite a lover. We birth a child; with our warm body fluids we remind the world of its pleasures and sensations. . . . We celebrate the sweat that pours from us during our labors." Can anyone familiar with the Our Father read this and contend that the feminist agenda is not a threat to Christianity?

While the provision for the ordination of women was permissive—meaning that it *might* be done, not *must* be done—those who oppose it have found themselves anathematized. Over and over the bishops of the church, nationally and internationally, promised that no discrimination would occur. Yet, in practice, men are denied admittance to Holy Orders if they oppose the ordination of women. Experienced priests are denied positions in the church. There are dioceses that have stated in writing that "no one who cannot accept the ordination of women" is welcome. In Kansas, two priests, the Dean of the Cathedral and his assistant, were told that while they could believe anything they wanted, their "behavior" must reflect acceptance of the ordination of women. Priests who quietly, prayerfully, and passively refused to accept communion at a service celebrated by a woman were publicly censured as "demented misogynists."

It is said that a deal was struck at the General Convention that passed the ordination of women. It was struck between the feminists and homosexuals. Admittedly, in many cases they may be one and the same. The latest agenda item is homosexuality. A number of bishops have already illegally ordained practicing homosexuals and authorized priests to bless homosexual unions. Feminist "theologians" are even beginning to discuss the "sin of heterosexuality." When traditionalists question these actions they are told to "hear" one another and be "sensitive" to the feeling of both sides. Yet, "sensitive and caring" bishops, men who can furrow their brows and make their lips quiver as they declare "I feel your pain," go steamrolling ahead with the agenda. Sound familiar?

Perhaps the most interesting transformation for these 60's liberals is their use of power and authority. Those who once held that authority was evil and power corrupt have become adept at tyrannical centralization. Property which was once held by both parish and diocese is now also held by the national church. Any parish that disagrees with the shenanigans of the hierarchy is welcome to leave, but its property and assets will stay with the church. Any parish that attempts to take its property is met with an immediate lawsuit, and usually its priest is deposed. Even dioceses on the brink of bankruptcy will spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to protect the franchise. The wishes of the parishioners are of no consequence. Property rights (of the diocese, that is) must prevail. Strange for an ideology which held property in contempt and advocated the destruction of institutions. Even stranger for those who contend that people are always more important than property (at least after a riot occurs).

Clergy deployment has also been centralized in the national church. A computerized system "matches" the profiles of clergy with the perceived needs of the parish. Yet, in many dioceses, the matched names are screened at the diocesan level. While the computer may match 100 names, the parish may be given only five, and these five names often reflect "gender and racial criteria." Many parishes are not allowed to look at candidates who do not meet the approval of the bishop or his staff. Political correctness is of greater importance than meeting the needs of the parishes and their parishioners.

These individuals who are so concerned with the feelings and needs of the oppressed seem to care little about the vast majority of their flock. In the last ten years, the Episcopal Church has lost over a third of her members. In the Diocese of Michigan, 57.5 percent of her members have left since 1970. The loud sucking sound heard throughout the United States is that of lifelong traditional Episcopalians leaving the church they love and cherish. As heartbreaking as is their plight, it is happiness itself compared to what awaits all Americans—for in the coming years, they will not even have the luxury of leaving.

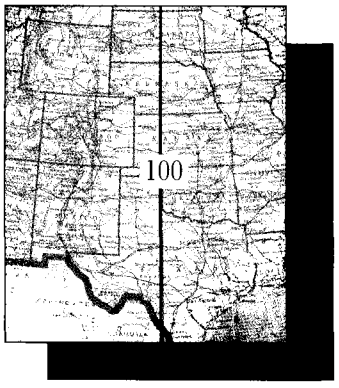
The Rev. Fr. Gene Geromel writes from St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Swartz Creek, Michigan.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Papagueria: II

Past Robles Junction where the road coming north from Sasabe meets Highway 86 we crossed onto the Papago reservation heading west toward the Indian capital of Sells, no lights ahead save the constellation of the Kitt Peak Observatory lifted high against the night sky by the bulk of the Baboquivari Mountains, and almost no traffic. Saguaros stood like ghostly warriors behind the creosote bushes, the mesquite and palo verde trees, and shrines appeared at intervals, interiorly illuminated by the glimmering lights of votive candles. These shrines house small wooden statues of St. Francis Xavier, brought by Papagos from the Mexican town of Magdalena de Kino south of Nogales where the body of Father Kino, discovered near Magdalena in 1966 by archeologists, reposes under glass; every year many thousands of people—Mexicans, Yaquis, Mayos, Papagos, and Lower Pimans—converge on the town to celebrate the Feast of San Francisco de Asís. The practice is one among many known collectively as "Sonoran Catholicism," the folk-Catholicism of the Tohono O'odham which probably developed during the second half of the 19th century in northern Sonora and includes the collection of sacred images, the recitation by laymen of sacred texts, and community feasts, with dancing, held in front of the Indian chapels under a ramada before a *cruz mayor*. "Do you believe in flying saucers?" Mike Rios asked as we passed beneath the black massif of Kitt Peak. Years before he had been driving west at night on 86 when his son cried out that something was flying overhead. Mike pulled off the road, cut the engine, and switched off the lights. As the family watched, the luminous blue shape passed above them and discharged five smaller shapes which quickly dispersed, making no sound at all. "I wonder about them a lot," he said; "where they came from, what's inside them. I guess my dream in life is to see one of them land." An oncoming car with one headlight out passed at dangerous speed, leaning precariously into the curve. "All these crosses you see along the road," Mike remarked; "ninety per-



cent of those accidents are alcohol-related."

Speaking above the noise of the engine he explained how as a former vice-chairman of the tribe he knows a thousand percent more than the people he has to work with, most of them 20 years younger and unappreciative of his experience and special knowledge. "Malcolm Forbes wrote a story about me. I was invited to the Forbes Dining Room on Wall Street when I was on a trip to New York City." He had also served on several pan-Indian councils and spent two years near Ganado on the Navajo Reservation with his wife, a Navajo woman who lives now in Phoenix. Mike confided that his next project after the water litigation battle was going to be the Kitt Observatory, which he said is guilty of underpaying its labor and failing to promote the Indians it employs. Just this evening he had filed papers relevant to the water business by Federal Express. Recently a California company with ties to the Rothschilds had wanted to build a development for 100,000 people including office towers and $400,000 homes (which, they promised, "anybody" could move into) on a 14,000-acre tract on the San Xavier Reservation under a 100-year lease. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Mike said disgustedly, had thought this a fine idea. The people in top positions at the BIA, he explained, are Anglos whose main concern is for their jobs and pensions. At Sells, where cattle and horses roamed the night streets of the capital, we stopped to buy gas before continuing on to Pisinemo. Mike described how he had been already halfway to Cleveland on the bus when the Bureau of Indian Affairs, deciding that the young man would make a better accountant than a lawyer, arranged to have him enrolled in the accounting rather than in the law school, where eventually he became a CPA instead of the lawyer he had always wanted to be. One of his chief ambitions, Mike said, was still to earn the LL.D.

At Pisinemo the air was rank with smoke from mesquite fires. The houses were all the uniform government-built ones, set into dirt yards and surrounded by the brush fences of the Papagos. There was the usual trash around, and the familiar cattle chewing the cud under dry bushes. Mike's adoptive son Albert, whom we had driven 100 miles from Tucson to bring back to San Xavier for the weekend, came from the house leaving the door open behind him as we drove up. Albert wore his hair long and an Army fatigue jacket over blue jeans. He had a speech impairment owing to fetal alcohol syndrome, dyslexia, and he was 17 years old. Mike had explained on the way out that he had quit living with his mother, who played around all the time besides getting drunk. He and his friends had spent the evening watching video movies, Albert said. The previous weekend Mike had left a petition relating to the water fight with Albert, who knew a girl who had access to a photocopying machine. Albert thought she hadn't had the petition copied yet, but Mike wanted to be certain of this so he had Albert get into the Land Cruiser with us and we drove to the next house on the street. "Stop here," Mike instructed me at the edge of the lot. Albert got out and walked up to the door to speak to the girl, while we kept the polite distance required by Papago etiquette. As we waited a white van with official plates moved up behind to observe us, Pisinemo being located on that portion of the reservation restricted to tribal members and their attended guests.

When Albert returned from the house he confirmed that the photocopies had not yet been made. "Do you like to drink beer?" he asked me. "Of course I like to drink beer." "Let's go buy some." "On the reservation?" "The bootlegger in Sells is my girlfriend's dad." We drove back to Sells, where Albert directed me along the dirt streets past the shacks and small brick houses to the bootlegger's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

place. He disappeared into the night, and at once a tribal patrol car slipped from behind us and proceeded to the end of the street, made a U-turn, and drove by the house again. Albert returned empty-handed and got back in the Land Cruiser. "Drive away now," he whispered. "Hurry—*hurry*!" When we had gone a couple of hundred yards he said, still whispering, "Now go back!" I cut the lights and Albert cautiously extended one leg over the runningboard. "You can take your foot off the brake peddle now!" he hissed through the open window. "We'll teach you how to drive on the reservation." When we saw him next he was carrying a black plastic bag containing three quart bottles of Budweiser beer. While Mike twisted the caps from the bottles, Albert instructed me in a roundabout departure through the streets of the town back to Highway 86, where he said to drive as fast as I could. In sight of the Tucson Mountains we stopped to relieve ourselves among saguaros on a hill overlooking the hazy midnight glare of the city, and Albert placed the empty bottles carefully upright behind a bush out of sight of the highway. We stopped again to visit the San Xavier bootlegger in the vicinity of tribal headquarters and slipped away with the lights off toward Mike Rios's place, where the three of us sat silently parked in a field, drinking beer and watching the moon, red with smoke, float higher in the sky between the climbing lights of the big jets out of Tucson International Airport.

Thirty-six hours later Albert looked much neater and cleaner, Mike's daughter, who is a beautician, having made him take a shower and then lowered his ears on Saturday. Mike Rios explained that it was because his own father had been a drunk that he felt a special empathy for Albert, whom he had befriended five years before and who he said was a very good kid, though if you yelled at him he tended to withdraw. The morning was warm, a hot still cloudless desert day in late March. Mike directed me onto a dirt road cutting south across an Indian housing development toward Black Mountain, which was a steep lava hill bare of saguaros on its north aspect but covered thickly with them on the opposite slope. "We have a story about that," Mike said. "I'itoi was climbing on the mountain with a pail of cactus seeds when he slipped and scattered the seeds, which all fell on the south side. You remember when we were talking, I said we have our own religion. We have I'itoi, you have that other god you people are always talking about. When I was in Cleveland, I went to 16 different churches. There, they—the Episcopalians, the Anglicans, the Presbyterians; whatever—were all talking about the one and only God. It makes me sort of want to laugh, you know?" Past Black Mountain he pointed to the 14,000-acre tract where in 1983-84 the California developers had wanted to put a small city. The area was a flat sandy plain covered with mesquite and creosote bush, valued by the tribe as a place where they could hunt rabbits and deer. The developers' plan had been to lease the land for $300,000, the lease itself being revertible to the Tohono O'odham after 100 years. "Providing, of course," Mike added sarcastically, "the community didn't secede—take itself out of the reservation. I got wind of the proposal from my aunt, who was on the tribal council in those days and gave it to me to read. I was so pissed off—so confused. Finally I told the developers to take the same proposal to the rich professional Anglo community under Mt. Lemmon. I told them: 'If they say, "That's a great idea!" then bring it right back here and we'll make a deal.'" Although the American Smelter Company's mine is just beyond the reservation limits, its tailings rest on Indian land for which the company pays the tribe six dollars per acre a year. The leaching pond, a wide circlet of thin discolored turquoise, is suspected of poisoning the ground water beneath the reservation. At a bridge across a clay access road Mike got out to search under the abutments where Satanic rituals are rumored to have been held recently. "Now I want to show you where I was raised," he said.

The Rios homestead was on the southern border of the San Xavier reservation at the end of a barely defined trail leading from a padlocked gate with a big NO TRESPASSING sign on it. To the left of the gate a section of fence had been thrown down; the standing part was plastered with trash. Mike explained that people visit the site pretty regularly, and that the tribe has been having trouble with trespassers cutting the fence and coming onto the reservation. We stepped over the wire and walked the few hundred yards among mesquite, cholla, barrel cactus, and prickly pear where skinks recently emerged from hibernation darted underfoot. Nothing remained of the house Mike Rios had grown up in but a pile of gray sand with gray wood splinters sticking from it. He was raised by his great-grandparents; the old woman, who died in 1966 at the age of 99, had remembered the people of San Xavier running from the Apaches when they raided the village. She had impressed on Mike his duty to get a good education, attend law school, and return to the reservation to help his people. As a boy, and later as a young man, he had been caught between his desire to earn a law degree and his loyalty to his circle of friends, who spent most of their time drinking. "I guess if I'd stayed here I'd have died of exposure. I used to chase the girls too; my grandmother never gave me any advice on the matter. Indians are reticent about discussing sex with adolescents. I believe there's money hidden someplace here. My grandmother used to put it away in a baking soda can, but I never saw what she did with it after she'd put some more in or taken more out."

Mike showed me the dry wash among the palo verde where he used to play and hide from his grandfather, the two cement cisterns, and the old water tower from which the pump and wheel were missing. These he said had been stolen. "Maybe if I ever move back out here I can talk the BIA into repairing the well. Normally they do as little as they can possibly get away with, but if you learn their rules you can play their game, and sometimes even win at it." We sat on a slab of concrete under a mesquite tree while Albert balanced on the edge of one of the cisterns, laughing to himself as he played with a handful of chicken bones he had found in the dust. "My father," Mike said, "sold off all his cattle in order to get money to satisfy his craving for liquor. They never learn. My father never learned. He would drink wine until he passed out. Finally he was hit by a car and had to go around with a walker, but he still went on drinking. We used to have fights about it. He'd say, 'You drink,' and I'd say, 'Yes, but not like you do.'"

From this vantage the city of Tucson was visible in the distance, its towers greatly diminished between the points of the dark volcanic hills. Mike asked me to glass the western ridge and tell him if anyone were up there watching us. A decade ago the Rios family had held a reunion—ten clans amounting to 40 people—on the opposite side of the hill, and afterward climbed to the ridgeline for a view of the old homestead below. ·c

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Subscribe to SOBRAN'S

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY

Joe Sobran

Joe Sobran...

- *former CBS "Spectrum" Commentator*
- *former Senior Editor,* **National Review** *magazine*
- *Columnist for Universal Press syndicate and* **The Wanderer**
- *and America's Sharpest Commentator*

12 pages of uncensored Sobran with new material not available anywhere else! Don't miss his insights on the collapse of the Christian culture, Rush Limbaugh, Newt Gingrich & Company, Norman Podhoretz, Bill & Hillary, marginalizing religion, and defenders of the faith. Also featured are his latest movie and book reviews.

See why he's called "America's Most Censored Conservative."

Subscribe today at the special rate of just $44.95 for one year (or $85 for a two years) and receive the audio tape "How Tyranny Came to America" as our gift.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

Make check payable to **The Vere Company**

☐ $44.95 for a 1-year subscription (regularly $59.95)

☐ $85.00 for a 2-year subscription (regularly $100.00)

Return this coupon to: P.O. Box 565, Dept. CM, Herndon, VA 22070-0565

To order by credit card, call 1-800-513-5053 Offer expires May 30, 1995

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

17th Annual

NATIONAL CONSERVATIVE STUDENT CONFERENCE

YOUNG AMERICA'S FOUNDATION

JULY 23-29, 1995
WASHINGTON, D.C.

"The conference will send you back to your campuses better informed, motivated and trained. Your work is vital to the future of the nation." — Ronald Reagan

- Learn the Principles of Activism
- Private Congressional Reception and Briefing
- Meet Conservative Leaders
- Conservative Academic Lectures
- Dinner Banquets with Famous Conservatives

For further information about the conference and an application, clip and mail to Young America's Foundation: F.M. Kirby Freedom Center, 110 Elden Street, Herndon, VA 22070, or call toll free: 1-800-292-9231

NAME_____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE_____ ZIP_____

Summer Conference

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED